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European University Institute
Department of History and Civilisation

REVOLUTION AND REMEMBRANCE:
THE COMMEMORATION OF THE DEAD IN
REVOLUTIONARY FRANCE
1789 – 1799

by

JOSEPH CLARKE

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to obtaining the degree of
Doctor in History and Civilisation
from the European University Institute

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Abbreviations

<i>Annales E. S. C.</i>	<i>Annales - économies, sociétés, civilisations</i>
<i>A. H. R.</i>	<i>American Historical Review</i>
<i>A. H. R. F.</i>	<i>Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française</i>
<i>A. M.</i>	<i>Ancien Moniteur</i>
<i>A. N.</i>	<i>Archives Nationales</i>
<i>A. P.</i>	<i>Archives Parlementaires</i>
<i>B. H. V. P.</i>	<i>Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris</i>
<i>B. L.</i>	<i>British Library</i>
<i>B. N.</i>	<i>Bibliothèque Nationale</i>
<i>D. H. S.</i>	<i>Dix-Huitième Siècle</i>
<i>F. H. S.</i>	<i>French Historical Studies</i>
<i>J. M. H.</i>	<i>Journal of Modern History</i>
<i>P. & P.</i>	<i>Past and Present</i>
<i>R. H. M. C.</i>	<i>Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine</i>
<i>S. V. E. C.</i>	<i>Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century</i>

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Introduction

Death came suddenly for Charles Dusson, a 31-year-old apprentice toolmaker from the rue de la Huchette in central Paris. Dusson, if he ever thought of such matters and he probably did not as he was preparing for his wedding in a few days time, had no right to expect an extravagant Requiem in the church of Saint-Séverin. He certainly had no reason to imagine that a great crowd, including 'un très grand nombre des bourgeois', would line the route of his funeral procession, or that his coffin would be borne through the streets to the sound of drums beating 'd'un manière lugubre', or that a public collection would pay for all this solemnity.¹ Had Dusson lived out his natural span, he might instead have looked forward to a funeral fitting his social standing: a few, very few, candles flickering dimly in a side chapel, a hurried *De Profundis*, and a quick march to the *fosse commune*.² His family, like Jacques Ménétra before him, would have kept a beady eye on the ceremony to see that they got their money's worth of candles and that the priest performed the rites he had been paid for.³ Perhaps, as he grew older, he might have saved up for a more elaborate funeral, but probably not. For ordinary Parisians like him, a funeral was generally a shabby affair, a far cry from the multitude of mourners, the prolonged peal of church bells and 'pompe attendrissante' that accompanied Dusson to the grave.⁴ Charles

¹ For details of Dusson's death and burial, see S.-P. Hardy, *Mes loisirs, ou journal d'événements tels qu'ils parviennent à ma connoissance*, B. N. ms. fonds français, no. 6687, vol. viii, pp. 395-6.

² For Mercier's account of a typical Parisian funeral in the 1780s, see L.-S. Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1994 ed.) vol. i, p. 644.

³ For Ménétra's childhood recollection of standing guard over his stepmother's coffin in Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois for this purpose, see J.-L. Ménétra, *Journal de ma Vie*, D. Roche ed. (Paris, 1982) p. 38.

⁴ Hardy, *Mes loisirs*, p. 396.

Dusson had no right to expect any of these things, but his death was different, because everything that happened on 14 July 1789 was different. Dusson had died 'courageusement', 'en volant au secours de la patrie' at the Bastille, and because of this, his funeral four days later stood convention on its head.⁵

Jean-Denis Blanc's death a day after Dusson's was just as unexpected. A respected provincial lawyer with a mildly radical reputation, Blanc had been unwell for some time, but this had not stopped him being elected by the commoners of Besançon to attend the Estates General in Versailles.⁶ Once there, Blanc melted anonymously into the swarming mass of confused deputies, and made little or no impact on proceedings during the Estates' first few months, that is, until the momentous sitting of 15 July, when Louis XVI arrived in the Assembly to announce his intention to cooperate with the deputies. After the tension of the preceding weeks, the king's appearance sent the deputies into a frenzy; they embraced one another, clapping wildly and cheering 'Vive le Roi'. The mood was euphoric, but it was all too much for the unfortunate Blanc and he collapsed on the spot, overcome by 'la joie qu'a éprouvée ce député' as one eyewitness put it.⁷ His remains were shipped home for burial in Besançon, where on 28 July, a great crowd gathered in the cathedral of Saint-Jean to pay their respects to their ill-fated deputy. The cream of Besançon society, the *parlement's* magistrates in their ceremonial robes, over two hundred National Guardsmen bedecked in mourning, and an enormous congregation turned out to hear archbishop Raymond de Durfort celebrate a solemn Requiem and intone a benediction over the huge catafalque that stood in the nave.⁸ Many in the congregation were visibly moved by this 'triste, quoique magnifique spectacle' and 'plusieurs personnes ont été émues jusques aux larmes.'⁹ As one observer noted: 'il serait impossible de rendre à un Roi... des honneurs funèbres plus grands que ceux qui ont été rendus aujourd'hui à M. Blanc.'¹⁰ For a commoner, and an illegitimate one at that, it was an extraordinary tribute.

⁵ Hardy, *Mes loisirs*, p. 396.

⁶ Blanc had published a couple of pamphlets on the rights of the Third Estate prior to his election. E. Lemay, ed. *Dictionnaire des Constituants*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1991) vol. i, p. 101.

⁷ *A. M.*, no. 19, 16 July 1789, p. 163.

⁸ Anon. *Honneurs rendus à Besançon à M. Blanc, premier député du Tiers-État de cette ville, décédé à Versailles, au mois de juillet*, (Paris, 1789) B. L. F.1083, no. 6.

⁹ *ibid.* p. 6.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 1.

Dusson and Blanc are both long forgotten. Their deaths, though dramatic at the time, now appear unremarkable. At best, they stand out as simply the first casualties of what was to become a decade, even a generation, of continuous conflict and upheaval. At worst, they are just two among the hundreds of thousands of Frenchmen who died violent or sudden deaths during the Revolutionary decade. Their funerals are, however, another matter, because these are the two earliest examples of what was soon to become a recurring theme in Revolutionary political culture: the commemoration of the Revolution's dead. From the funerals of Dusson and Blanc in 1789 and the celebration of Mirabeau and Voltaire in 1791 or Lepeletier and Marat in 1793 to the commemoration of the citizen-soldier during the Terror and the celebration of Generals Hoche and Joubert under the Directory, the commemoration continued throughout the Revolution. Some of those honoured, Mirabeau, Voltaire and Rousseau, for example, were household names whose fame long pre-dated the Revolution; others, like Dusson, the dead of August 10th, Joseph Bara and the Republic's war-dead, were distinguished only for having died in its defence. A few, like Marat, had risen from relative obscurity to national prominence on the tide of Revolutionary politics, but more, like Guillaume Simonneau in 1792 or Thomas Gasparin and Claude Fabre in *an II*, achieved this distinction only in death. Some, like Blanc, or the thoroughly anonymous *conventionnel*, Jean Féraud in 1795, were simply unlucky. As the Revolution progressed, it would, as a rule, take more than Blanc's weak heart to warrant such solemnities, but sometimes not much more. 1 prairial *an III* was no time to be confused with the notorious Fréron, but even so, the thermidorians honoured this grisly case of mistaken identity with almost as much zeal as they devoted to hunting down Féraud's killers in the faubourgs.¹¹ Both the heroes and the funerals varied over time, but this strange and sometimes macabre series of commemorations is one of the few constants in the cultural life of the Revolution. The great wave of Federations receded in the acrimonious summer of 1791, the festivals of Reason burned brightly for a few months during the Terror but were then stifled, and the Directory's moribund civic ceremonies simply never got off the ground, but the Revolution always had its dead to bury.

¹¹ According to Baudot, Féraud was killed during the journée because he had been mistaken for Fréron. M. A. Baudot, *Notes Historiques sur la Convention Nationale, le Directoire, l'Empire et l'exil des voyants*, (Paris, 1893) p. 108

The purpose of this thesis is to explain what the remembrance meant to the men and women who staged and attended countless commemorations, raised monuments, listened to speeches and purchased prints, busts and souvenirs in memory of the Revolution's dead. It seeks to understand the cultural traditions these people drew upon when they remembered the Revolution's dead and to explore how these rites of remembrance evolved to meet the ever-changing requirements of Revolutionary politics. It will ask what ends this bewildering array of funeral masses and commemorative ceremonies, processions and pageants, eulogies and odes, monuments and mementos served and who stood to gain from them. Just as importantly, it will explore how the ceremonial changed and the representation of the dead altered according to who was remembered and who did the remembering. It will ask how the commemoration of the Revolution's dead varied according to political circumstance, but it will also examine how the meaning of these rites altered according to wider social and cultural factors, the social status, age, education and gender, of those involved in the commemorative process. Above all, it will look beyond Paris and its assemblies, its political clubs and its new Panthéon, to the ceremonies that were held and the monuments that were raised in towns and villages throughout France to see how the imperatives that governed commemoration varied from place to place.

In both Paris and the provinces, the variety of forms commemoration assumed was matched only by the diversity of the men it honoured, and this diversity poses an important question for the historian of Revolutionary remembrance. Honouring an individual with a national reputation like Mirabeau or even an international standing like Voltaire was obviously a quite different experience from attending Charles Dusson's funeral in a Paris church or raising a cenotaph to an undistinguished soldier in a small country town, but how exactly did this difference influence both the form and function of these rites? This difference, the difference between celebrating a politician or a *philosophe* renowned for their oratory or authorship but unknown as an individual and remembering a local hero, possibly even a family member or a friend, poses what is, perhaps, the most elusive question of all. In a period when political considerations can so easily appear to overwhelm all other concerns, what private ends did the Revolution's rites of memory serve? What consolation did commemoration bring to those the dead left behind, and what conflicts did this

relationship between the public and the private dimensions of remembrance give rise to?

Some of these questions can never be fully answered. We can, for example, never know what it meant to Charles Dusson's fiancée to have heard her prospective husband acclaimed a hero, any more than we can ever really understand what the villagers of tiny Pagny in the Jura made of the bust of Marat that replaced the cross in front of their parish church in the winter of *an II*.¹² Siméon Hardy, in describing Dusson's death and burial in his diary, never even recorded his fiancée's name let alone mentioned her feelings, and the little we know of Pagny's monument to Marat is entirely due to Jacques Dulaure's brief stop there during his flight to Switzerland in December 1793. The sources do not exist to address these particular problems, but in their absence, others can be found to answer the same kind of questions in many similar instances. The proceedings of the Revolution's successive assemblies, administrations and political associations, the enormous pamphlet literature the Revolution gave rise to and its equally voluminous newspaper press have all been consulted for information about the politics of Revolutionary remembrance. These sources have been studied in order to understand how and why Revolutionaries made the choices they did about who to remember and, just as importantly, who to forget, and how and when to do so. These choices were made in Paris, but they were made throughout provincial France as well, and this study has looked beyond the metropolis to the provincial press and the minutes of Jacobins clubs from Rouen and Colmar to Artonne and Orthez in order to understand how the politics of memory evolved in the provinces. So too, a wide range of visual sources, from gardening books and tourist guides, paintings and engravings, architectural plans, projects and sketches, to plaster busts and cheap political souvenirs, have been examined in order to explore the aesthetics of Revolutionary commemoration and to chart how the representation of the Revolution's dead evolved over time. These varied sources have been the building blocks of this study, and by examining them we can establish the whys and wherefores of staging ceremonies and commissioning cenotaphs, the political motives that drove Revolutionaries to remember their dead, the cultural traditions they drew upon in doing so, and the reactions these representations provoked.

¹² J.-A. Dulaure, *Mémoires de Dulaure avec une introduction par M. L. de la Sicotière*, (Paris, 1862) p. 349.

However, to rely on these sources alone would be to oversimplify what the memory of the dead meant to those who honoured them, because commemoration is not simply about official speeches, political pageantry and propagandist art. Nor is its study merely the modish variation on high politics or art history that historians sometimes assume. Commemoration is more complex than that, and for this reason, its meaning cannot be contained within the confines of a festival programme or an architect's plan and the emotions it expresses cannot be reduced to the main points of a political speech or the reports of a partisan press. In order to understand what the remembrance of the Revolution's dead meant to the men and women who attended ceremonies, listened to speeches and purchased prints and busts, this study has looked to the personal testimony of those who remembered as well as those who orchestrated these rites of memory. It has sought insights from the diaries, letters and memoirs of the Revolution's leading actors, its minor players and those, like Siméon Hardy, Célestine Guittard and Nicolas Rogue, whose contribution to these rites was restricted to the rôle of spectator, but whose eyewitness accounts and personal impressions are no less valuable for that.

The meaning of memory in Revolutionary France cannot be accessed through one set of sources because Revolutionary remembrance followed no set rules. The Revolution's rites of memory honoured an eclectic assortment of heroes with an even more extensive array of ceremonies, memorials and speeches, and they were, more often than not, slave to the event, a ritualised response to the sudden death or assassination, the ceremonial conclusion to an unexpected *journée*. For all that successive Revolutionary assemblies sought to impose an unambiguous rationale upon the commemorations they staged, for all that subsequent scholars have sought to summarise the evolution of commemorative politics during the 1790s as an ineluctable evolution 'du sacre du philosophe au sacre du militaire', there is no 'master narrative' here.¹³ Rather, the reality of Revolutionary remembrance, the lived experience of honouring heroes as different as Dusson, Marat, or Rousseau in places as diverse as Saint-Séverin, the Panthéon, the *salle des séances* of a *société populaire*

¹³ On the idea of the 'master narrative' in official commemoration see, P. Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, (Cambridge, 1996) pp. 70 ff. For Annie Jourdan's attempt to encapsulate the experience of an entire decade in one convenient catchphrase, see A. Jourdan, 'Du sacre du philosophe au sacre du militaire: les Grands Hommes et la Révolution', *R. H. M. C.* vol. 39, (1992) pp. 403-22.

or a village square testifies to diversity rather than uniformity, to a complex cultural experience rather than any convenient simplicity.

Perhaps for this reason, historians have often dismissed the Revolution's rites of memory in a few embarrassed words, as if this cavalcade of corpses and coffins somehow demeaned the principles of 1789 with their obstinate corporality. Emmet Kennedy's attempt to explain the recurrence of these rites throughout the decade by reference to 'a certain necrophilia on his [David's] part, and on that of the Revolution, obsessed at it was... with dead' is perhaps an extreme example of this, but it is far from unique.¹⁴ In its seemingly self-contained logic, such an account has its own attractions, but Kennedy's explanation will not do because an allusion to David is not enough to explain the essence of the Revolutionary imagination, just as no single oration in an assembly can comprehend the experience of an entire nation. Kennedy's rationalization is too easy and his reference to David's dictatorship of the arts in *an II* too restrictive to account for a decade's worth of Requiem masses and Revolutionary memorials, but it is also indicative of a wider reluctance on the part of historians to look beyond what Lynn Hunt has described as 'the revolutionaries' passion for the allegorical'.¹⁵ Undoubtedly this passion was widely felt. Too many idealised figures of Liberty, Reason, or the Republic appeared over the course of the decade to pretend otherwise. However, this passion for abstraction was not all-consuming, and it did not preclude the blood-stained realism that marked so many Revolutionary funerals. It is not enough to trace Marianne's ancestry back to the 1790s to explain the evolution of the Republican imagination, but all too often, this is what most cultural historians have been content to do.

This is not to say that valuable work has not been done on individual aspects of Revolutionary remembrance, but it is to suggest that commemoration has remained on the margins of Revolutionary historiography, and that its study has been patchy, uneven and disjointed. Historians have examined some elements of the question, but ignored many others. They have, for example, focussed attention on the prominent politicians and artists who choreographed the capital's commemorations, but

¹⁴ E. Kennedy, *A Cultural History of the French Revolution*, (New Haven, 1989) p. 287. Similarly, Jean Starobinski, claims that 'an aura of necrophilia hangs over all the work of David'. J. Starobinski, *1789: the emblems of Reason*, (Charlottesville, 1982) p. 117.

¹⁵ L. Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution*, (London, 1986) p. 55.

overlooked the crowds that attended them, and with very occasional exceptions, entirely ignored the province's rites of memory.¹⁶ And yet, much of interest has been uncovered. James Leith and Annie Jourdan, in particular, have contributed greatly to our understanding of the Revolution's art and architecture, its commemorative projects and paintings.¹⁷ So too, the establishment of the Panthéon has been the subject of numerous studies, but its place in the wider culture of Revolutionary commemoration and the politics of specific pantheonisations have received far less attention.¹⁸ Similarly, David's Revolutionary career, the pageants he staged and the portraits he painted, has been analysed again and again by historians drawn to this precocious example of artistic engagement, although many of his less talented but no less productive peers still await the historian's gaze.¹⁹ The art and architecture of Revolutionary remembrance have received considerable attention, albeit often by default, and the same might be said for its ceremonial aspects. Individual commemorations have been the subject of occasional articles, especially when they touch on the relationship between the Republic of Letters and the Republic of the Year II,²⁰ and the wider question of the Revolution's ritual life has been the subject of

¹⁶ With the exception of a few antiquated studies of Revolutionary festivals in the provinces such as Bois' study of the festival in Angers or Forot's work on Tulle, little has been done on these ceremonies in provincial France. A notable exception is Mazauric's essay on Republican remembrance in Rouen in 1793. B. Bois, *Les Fêtes Révolutionnaires à Angers de l'an II à l'an VIII (1793-1799)*, (Angers, 1928) V. Forot, *Les Fêtes Nationales et Cérémonies Publiques à Tulle sous la Révolution et la première République*, (Brive, 1904), and C. Mazauric, *Jacobinisme et Révolution: autour du Bicentenaire de Quatre-vingt-neuf*, (Paris, 1984)

¹⁷ See, in particular, J. A. Leith, *The Idea of Art as Propaganda in France: 1750-1799: A Study in the History of Ideas*, (Toronto, 1965) and *Space and Revolution: Projects for Monuments, Squares and Public Buildings in France 1789-1799*, (Montreal, 1991) and A. Jourdan, *Les Monuments de la Révolution, 1770-1804: Une Histoire de la Représentation*, (Paris, 1997)

¹⁸ The literature on the Panthéon ranges from tour guides to academic colloquia, but the most important works remain the essays collected in *Le Panthéon, Symbole des Révolutions: Exposition présentée du 31 mai au 30 juillet 1789 à l'Hôtel de Sully à Paris*, (Montréal and Paris, 1989) J.-C. Bonnet, *Naissance du Panthéon*, (Paris, 1998) and M. Ozouf, 'Le Panthéon' in P. Nora, ed. *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, vol. i, *La République*, pp. 139-66.

¹⁹ The literature on David is vast, but the most significant studies of his Revolutionary career are D. Dowd, *Jacques-Louis David, Pageant-Master of the Republic*, (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1948) R. Herbert, *David, Voltaire, Brutus and the French Revolution: an Essay in Art and Politics*, (New York, 1967) D. Johnson, *Jacques-Louis David: Art in Metamorphosis*, (Princeton, 1993) and T. Crow, *Emulation: Making Artists for Revolutionary France*, (New Haven, 1995). For two important studies of individual portraits by David, see R. Simon, 'David's Martyr-Portrait of Le Peletier de Saint-Fargeau and the conundrums of Revolutionary representation', *Art History*, vol. xiv, (1991) pp. 459-86, and T. J. Clark, 'Painting in the Year Two', *Representations*, no. 47, (1994) pp. 13-63.

²⁰ For some of the better studies of individual commemorations, see, for example, J. Leith, 'Le Culte de Franklin en France avant et pendant la Révolution Française', *A. h. R. f.*, (1976) pp. 543-71, and 'Les Trois Apothéoses de Voltaire', *A. h. R. f.* (1979) vol. 51, pp. 161-209, and A. Jourdan, A., 'Le Culte de Rousseau sous la Révolution: La statue et la panthéonisation du Citoyen de Genève', *S. V. E. C.* no. 324, (1994) pp. 57-77.

unceasing study from Aulard and Mathiez to Ozouf.²¹ However, taken as a whole, these works either adopt too narrow a perspective, focussing, for example, on just one particular ceremony, or else dismiss these constant commemorations as merely another manifestation of the Revolution's monotonously single-minded attempt to use ritual to sacralise the new political order.

Would the Parisians who attended Dusson's funeral have ever understood that they were engaged in the first instance of a sweeping transfer of sacrality? Would this term have meant any more to the men and women who mourned Mirabeau in 1791 or honoured Marat two years later? Alain Bourreau's warning: 'bien souvent l'historien sacralise ce qu'il a renoncé à expliquer' springs to mind.²² So too, Edward Thompson's frequently quoted but rarely applied axiom concerning 'the enormous condescension of posterity' seems an appropriate admonition for a historiography that so frequently dismisses the concerns of its subjects in its quest for a higher truth.²³ Research into the new political culture that emerged over the course of the 1790s has dominated the writing of Revolutionary history for the past three decades, but much of this research has been predicated on the assumption that the Revolutionary experience can somehow be reduced to its discourse and that this discourse constitutes the 'maître absolu de la politique'.²⁴ Doubtless, this discursive approach to Revolutionary history has proved fruitful in some respects, but its 'disproportionate interest in what is said rather than in what is done' and narrowly textual approach has done much to diminish our understanding of Revolutionary culture.²⁵ By contrast,

²¹ The key works in the debate on the Revolutionary festival are A. Mathiez, *Les Origines des Cultes Révolutionnaires: 1789-1792*, (Geneva, 1977 ed.) and *La Théophilanthropie et le Culte Décadaire: Essai sur l'Histoire Religieuse de la Révolution*, (Geneva, 1975 ed.) M. Ozouf, *La Fête Révolutionnaire*, (Paris, 1973) and the essays contained in J. Ehrard and P. Villaneix eds. *Les Fêtes de la Révolution: Colloque de Clermont-Ferrand (juin 1974)*, (Paris, 1977)

²² A. Bourreau, *Le Simple Corps du Roi: l'impossible sacralité des souverains français: XVe-XVIIIe siècle*, (Paris, 1988) p. 41.

²³ E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, (London, 1980 ed.) p. 12.

²⁴ F. Furet, *Penser la Révolution Française*, (Paris, 1978) p. 84

²⁵ For Stephen Kaplan's criticism of Furet and his followers' overweening emphasis on Revolutionary language, see S. L. Kaplan, *Farewell Revolution: The Historians' Feud; France, 1789-1989* (Ithaca, 1995) p. 68. William Sewell, Robert Darnton and Claude Langlois have raised similar concerns about this textual approach, while Timothy Tackett's recent research has done much to highlight the poverty of this overly discourse based approach to Revolutionary politics. W. Sewell, *A Rhetoric of Bourgeois Revolution: the Abbé Sieyès and What is the Third Estate?* (Durham, N. C. 1994) C. Langlois, 'Furet's Revolution', *F. H. S.* vol. 16, (1990) pp. 766-76, R. Darnton, *The Forbidden Bestsellers of pre-Revolutionary France*, (London, 1996) pp. 176-80, and T. Tackett, *Becoming a Revolutionary: the Deputies of the French National Assembly and the Emergence of a Revolutionary Political Culture (1789-1790)*, (Princeton, 1996), 'Conspiracy Obsession in a Time of Revolution: French Elites and the

this study will seek to refocus attention on the Revolution as a dynamic, lived experience, and to restore some sense of agency, and even individuality, to men and women who have, for too long, been the captives of Furet's 'circuit sémiotique' or reduced to the status of an equally ethereal 'opinion publique'.

Paradoxically, the very historians who have been most out of favour since the 'cultural turn', an older generation of scholars such as Lefebvre, Soboul and Vovelle, have always been more alive to the range and complexity of Revolutionary culture than the exponents of the 'new cultural history'.²⁶ Their insistence upon the diversity of Revolutionary culture and their willingness to look beyond the rhetoric of politics to the variegated social reality behind it may seem outmoded, but their work has made for a more inclusive understanding of the Revolutionary experience than that offered by many more recent historians for all their recourse to modish cultural theories.²⁷ Albert Soboul's seminal study of the Revolution's martyrs of liberty and 'saintes patriotes' is a case in point. After almost half a century, it remains the most sensitive, and in many respects, the most sophisticated, discussion of any aspect of Revolutionary remembrance.²⁸ However, for all its insight, Soboul's discussion of the cult of Marat still suffers from many of the same faults as the wider study of the *sans-culottes* from which it was drawn. For Soboul, the cult of Marat, like the *sans-culotterie* itself, appears to erupt suddenly in the summer of 1793 and disappears almost as abruptly with the demise of the popular movement after Thermidor. No precedents are cited to explain why Parisian militants honoured Marat with the words and the rituals that they did, and no consideration is given to the celebration of his memory in the provinces. Seen through the prism of Soboul's well-regimented *sans-culotterie*, the cult of Marat appears to be an isolated, even exceptional, explosion of remembrance in the midst of the Revolution's more rarefied cults of Reason and the Supreme Being rather than a continuation of the same compulsion to commemorate

Origins of the Terror, 1789-1792', *A. H. R.* (June 200) pp. 692-713, and *When the King took flight*, (Cambridge, Mass., 2003)

²⁶ See, for example, G. Lefebvre, *The Great Fear of 1789: Rural Panic in Revolutionary France*, (London, 1973 ed.) and M. Vovelle, *La Mentalité Révolutionnaire*, (Paris, 1985)

²⁷ While Antoine de Baecque's recent study of the representation of the body in Revolutionary iconography is one of the most imaginative and theoretically sophisticated studies of its kind, his 'metaphorical' approach also illustrates many of the shortcomings of much recent scholarship in this sphere, by altogether ignoring the wider questions of how such imagery was received and by whom. A. de Baecque, *Le corps de l'Histoire: Métaphores et Politique (1770-1800)*, (Paris, 1993)

²⁸ A. Soboul, 'Sentiment Religieux et Cultes Populaires: Saintes Patriotes et Martyrs de la Liberté', *A. H. R. f.*, (1957) no. 3, pp. 192-213.

that had mourned the *vainqueurs* in 1789, or honoured Mirabeau two years later. And yet, despite these reservations, Soboul's essay is more alive to the complexity of commemoration in *an II* than most subsequent studies of this subject.²⁹

Work has been done on the remembrance of the dead during the Revolution and this study seeks to build on these foundations. However, much remains to be done. Decisive episodes in the evolution of the Revolution's rites of memory, the commemoration of the *vainqueurs de la Bastille* and of Mirabeau, for example, have been entirely overlooked, and the remembrance of the Revolution's war-dead has been, to all intents and purposes, ignored. Similarly, crucial questions concerning the Revolutionaries' choice of who and how to commemorate and the reactions such choices provoked have remained essentially unasked. Above all, there has been no concerted attempt to examine the rôle of remembrance in Revolutionary political culture and to chart its evolution over the course of the decade in a comprehensive way.

This failure to give the Revolution's rites of memory their due seems all the more surprising given the pioneering rôle historians of France have played in the study of collective memory. Admittedly, the 19th and 20th centuries have been rather better served than the *ancien régime* and the Revolution in this respect, but nevertheless, questions of collective memory and commemoration have been at the forefront of French historical study for a considerable time. From Maurice Agulhon and June Hargrove's studies of the 'statuomanie' that transformed the 19th century French city into 'an open-air Panthéon' to Antoine Prost's work on the *monuments aux morts* that appeared after the First World War, the archaeology of the recent French past has been excavated with imagination and insight by historians on both sides of the Atlantic.³⁰ The monumental legacy of modern Republicanism has been carefully catalogued and closely scrutinised by these historians, and Robert Gildea has extended our understanding of the crucial importance of commemoration in French

²⁹ A more detailed discussion of the historiography of the cult of Marat follows in chapter V, but for the time being, it is enough to mention some of the more recent works on this subject: F.-P. Bowman, 'La Sacré-Cœur de Marat 1793' in *Les Fêtes de la Révolution*, (Paris, 1977) pp. 155-79, J. Guilhamou, *La Mort de Marat*, (Brussels, 1989) and J.-C. Bonnet, ed. *La Mort de Marat*, (Paris, 1986).

³⁰ M. Agulhon, 'La «statuomanie» et l'histoire', in Agulhon, *Histoire Vagabonde*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1988) vol. i, pp. 138-85, p. 143, J. Hargrove, 'Les Statues de Paris' in Nora (ed.) *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, vol. ii, pp. 1855-86, and A. Prost, 'Les Monuments aux Morts: Culte Républicain? Culte Civique? Culte Patriotique?' in P. Nora (ed.) *Les Lieux de Mémoire: La République*, vol. i, pp. 195-229.

political culture still further with his wide-ranging review of the rôle of the past in recent French history.³¹ Encompassing everything from ritual and rhetoric to the politically resonant spaces that occupy such a vital place in modern French politics, his work is an exemplary exercise in the 'invention of tradition' in a national context and a model for political historians. More recently, Avner Ben-Amos has traced the development of the state funeral in France from the Revolutionary decade to the present day.³² His work illustrates the importance of the funeral festival in modern French politics, especially during the Third Republic, but his introductory chapter on the 1790s, like his resolutely political emphasis on the commemoration of the Republican *Grand Homme*, can hardly hope to express the sheer diversity of the Revolutionary experience. And of course, towering over these individual studies, there is Pierre Nora's multi-volume *Les Lieux de Mémoire*. Extraordinarily ambitious, encyclopaedic in its scope, illuminating and often infuriating, it has almost become a monument in itself.

Collective memory clearly matters to French historians, even if Nora's claim that it offers 'le seul tremplin qui permette de retrouver à la France', like Gildea's suggestion that 'what defines a political culture above all is not some sociological factor such as race or class or creed but collective memory,' can seem a little overstated.³³ And yet, for all the many insights these works provide, none of them can serve as a model for a study of the remembrance of the dead in Revolutionary France. Their overweening emphasis on the politics of memory, on the intentions of the elites who staged these ceremonies and raised these statues, and on their attempts to use commemoration to promote a sense of political community seem far too one-dimensional to account for the variety and vitality of the Revolution's rites of memory. Indeed, in this respect, both the historians of French collective memory and of the Revolutionary cultural experience seem constrained by their common debt to Durkheim. From Halbwachs to Nora, and from Mathiez to Ozouf, Durkheim's discussion of the social function of ritual in the creation and conservation of social

³¹ R. Gildea, *The Past in French History*, (New Haven, 1994)

³² A. Ben-Amos, *Funerals, Politics and Memory in Modern France, 1789-1996*, (Oxford, 2000)

³³ Nora, 'La Nation-Mémoire', *Les Lieux de Mémoire: La Nation*, vol. iii, (Paris, 1986) p. 651, and Gildea, *The Past in French History*, p. 9.

structure has furnished generations of historians of both commemoration and of the Revolutionary cults with an authoritative, but also inflexible, interpretative guide.³⁴

Durkheim's influence on these two branches of historical enquiry has been a fertile one, but the dominance of this interpretative framework has also had its disadvantages, and Stephen Lukes, for one, has accused 'neo-Durkheimian' historians of over-simplifying the ritual world. As Lukes has suggested, too many historians have, in deference to Durkheim, chosen to study 'rituals which ostensibly support their view of social integration around a single value system' while studiously ignoring ritual forms that undermine social integration or express political tension.³⁵ This criticism seems particularly apt in this instance, but Lukes' critique goes further and he argues that such studies generally 'begin and end with the official interpretation and altogether fail to explore, not only different levels of symbolic meaning in the ritual, but also the socially patterned differences of interpretation among those who participate in them or observe them.'³⁶ This stress on the 'socially-patterned differences of interpretation' that ritual may involve, like Chartier's insistence that historians 'should assume that a gap existed between the norm and real-life experience', offers a valuable corrective to the narrow functionalism that suffuses the study of commemoration in France.³⁷ These comments seem even more apposite when applied to the current view of the Revolutionary festival as an admittedly variegated but ultimately unchanging, attempt to 'refaire l'unité'.³⁸

³⁴ The question of who influenced who is particularly circular here. Mathiez's 1904 analysis of *Les Origines des Cultes Révolutionnaires* was explicit in its theoretical debt to Durkheim. Drawing on the latter's definition of religious phenomena in the *Année Sociologique* of 1899, Mathiez posited the existence of one, true revolutionary religion characterised by its common beliefs and obligatory, social nature. Durkheim then returned the complement by drawing on Mathiez in *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* in 1912, when he suggested that the 'aptitude of society for setting itself up as a god or for creating gods was never more apparent than during the first years of the French Revolution.' E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, (Ann Arbor, 1960 ed.) p. 244. Similarly, when we turn to the historiography of collective memory in France, the parameters of interpretation have been largely set by Durkheim's student and colleague, Maurice Halbwachs, whose *On Collective Memory* forms the cornerstone of Nora's analysis of the rôle of memory in *Les Lieux de Mémoire*.

³⁵ S. Lukes, 'Political Ritual and Social Integration' *Sociology*, vol. ix, (1975) pp. 289-308, p. 299.

³⁶ *Ibid.* p. 301.

³⁷ R. Chartier, *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France*, (Princeton, 1987) p. 9, and Lukes, 'Political Ritual', p. 302.

³⁸ Ozouf, *La Fête Révolutionnaire*, p. 469. Ozouf's debt to Durkheim is explicit in this respect, but by the same token, her argument seems especially prone to the sins of omission that Lukes describes. Her selection of festivals seems questionable in this sense, especially as it all but overlooks a decade's worth of funerals and commemorations, while her focus on the intentions of the festival organiser effectively exclude the possibility that this ceremonies might be reconfigured by their audiences to express quite different aims.

Certainly, Ozouf's avowedly Durkheimian description of the Revolutionary festival may help to explain the thinking that lay behind the festivals of the Federations or the Supreme Being, but can all Revolutionary ritual be reduced to these fleeting experiences, or defined solely in terms of the unrealised objectives of the new political elite? Faced with such questions, the limitations of this Durkheimian paradigm become obvious. This is not to suggest that the historian has nothing to learn from the anthropologist: the interaction between these two disciplines has produced much fine work and this study has sought to incorporate lessons learnt from Geertz along with Turner's insights into the ritual world where they seem appropriate.³⁹ However, it is to suggest that an over-dependence on another discipline's methods and definitions may hinder as much as help historians in their attempts to understand the past. Certainly, Durkheim may have much to teach us about ritual in Revolutionary political culture, but his emphasis on its rôle in the creation of consensus seems especially incongruous when applied to a decade characterised, above all, by very real social and political conflict.

Lukes' analysis of political ritual is an important point of departure for this study, but his reservations are open to review in their turn. In allowing for the possibility that rituals might be 'used strategically' or that they might be used to express conflict or 'mobilise bias', Lukes has certainly opened up new fields of enquiry. However, his rituals remain resolutely political; the values they seek to promote and the conflicts they aim to articulate belong to the public sphere, not to the private. Can the same be said of the remembrance of the dead? Perhaps, when the dead are distant figures, politicians or *philosophes*, their commemoration can be considered to be an essentially political event, but what of those, like Dusson, who were known to the men and women who commemorated them? Can we, with any confidence, say that the members of the congregation that assembled in Saint-Séverin on 18 July 1789 came together exclusively for reasons of state or assume that their decision to mark the death of a familiar face from work or from the *quartier*, perhaps even a friend, was a purely political act? To consider commemoration solely in these terms, to view

³⁹ See, for example, C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, (New York, 1973) and V. Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*, (Ithaca, 1974) For an overview of some of the issues raised by this interaction, see P. Burke, 'Historians, Anthropologists and Symbols', in E. Ohnuki-Tierney, (ed.) *Culture through Time, Anthropological Approaches*, (Stanford, 1990) pp. 268-83.

its ceremonies as simply conduits for a partisan message, the 'mémoire... déjà républicaine' of Bonnet's 18th century *éloges* for instance, or to look on its memorials as merely the embodiment of an ideology in stone, 'le civisme républicaine' of Prost's war memorials for example, would be to write a hopelessly incomplete account of what the remembrance of the dead represents for those who remember.⁴⁰ It would be to privilege the political purpose of commemoration over the private experience of remembrance and to prioritise the politicians' agenda over the emotional needs and social responsibilities of the individuals, families and communities who honour, but also grieve for, the dead. Indeed, to write of remembrance in this way seems indefensible in the light of Jay Winter's pioneering work on the commemoration of the Great War dead.⁴¹ Rather, the commemoration of the dead is a political statement, a social act, and a profoundly personal experience at one and the same time. Unlike any other form of civic ceremonial, it unites the public and the private in a unique combination of celebration and sorrow, and its memorials are both 'sites of memory' and 'sites of mourning'. The 'pompe attendrissante' that accompanied Charles Dusson to the grave and the 'larmes' that flowed during Blanc's requiem in Besançon cannot be easily accommodated within the grand sweep of Nora's transition from *la mémoire-État* to *la mémoire-nation* or even reconciled with Lukes' more matter-of-fact 'mobilisation of bias'.⁴²

Emotions, regret, respect, sorrow and a sense of loss, and the individuals who experience them, have been, more often than not, absent from historians' attempts to explain what the commemoration of the dead means to the living. This is, perhaps, understandable. Historians have traditionally been wary of emotions. A discipline built on the affectation of objectivity inevitably finds feelings awkward to analyse, and the sources for such a study are notoriously hard to pin down, although this has not deterred the more adventurous and idiosyncratic historians, scholars such as Theodore Zeldin and Philippe Ariès, from exploring them. However, in the field of

⁴⁰ Writing of the nineteenth-century's mania for erecting commemorative statues, Maurice Agulhon makes essentially the same point by emphasising the political messages these monuments were meant to convey: 'bref, l'idéologie implicite de la statuomanie, c'est l'humanisme libéral, dont plus tard la démocratie sera l'extension naturelle.' Agulhon, 'La «statuomanie» et l'histoire', p. 143, J.-C. Bonnet, *Naissance du Panthéon: Essai sur le Culte des Grands Hommes*, (Paris, 1998) p. 80, and Prost, 'Les Monuments aux Morts: Culte Républicain? Culte Civique? Culte Patriotique?', p. 214.

⁴¹ J. Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: the Great War in European Cultural History*, (Cambridge, 1995)

⁴² Lukes, 'Political Ritual and Social Integration', p. 302.

Revolutionary studies, genuine human emotions, as distinct from the fashionable effusions of sentimental literature or the well-planned pathos of David's pageantry, have received scant attention, and neither the sobs that saturate Vincent-Buffault's study of sensibility nor the pretend paternalism and fictitious families that pervade Hunt's 'family romance' seem any substitute for real tears shed by real families.⁴³ There are, of course, occasional exceptions to this neglect, and Richard Cobb has done more than most to put individuals, their passions and their private lives back into Revolutionary politics, but Cobb has always been drawn to the more explosive expressions of emotional life. The violent rages of a Nicolas Guénot and the rowdy comradeship of a Counter-Revolutionary crowd baying for revenge in the year III are more to his taste than the grief of a girl left to face the world alone after the fighting at the Bastille or the sorrow of a woman widowed by the Revolutionary wars. Nevertheless, Cobb's contention that 'the borders between private life and political militancy' remained blurred throughout the Revolution should not be ignored.⁴⁴ To overlook this point, to chose to pretend that the commemoration of the dead is a purely political affair would be, as Claude Langlois was warned in another context, to write 'a history without', a history without feeling, without nuance, without variation, but above all, without real people.⁴⁵

The history of collective memory in modern France has also, for the most part, been a history without religious belief. Certainly, Jay Winter and Annette Becker have highlighted the rôle religious beliefs and images played in mediating the grief of those who mourned the dead of the Great War, while Michel Lagrée's thoughtful record of Brittany's 'tombes de mémoire' sensitively illustrates the intricate web of religious devotions that characterise commemoration in the west of France.⁴⁶ However, the understanding these historians have brought to the study of French commemorative culture is, unfortunately, all too rare. On the contrary, the wide range of convictions,

⁴³ A. Vincent-Buffault, *Histoire des larmes, XVIIIe XIX siècles*, (Paris, 1986) and L. Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*, (Berkeley, 1992)

⁴⁴ For Cobb's discussion of the rise and fall of Guénot, see R. Cobb, *Reactions to the French Revolution*, (Oxford, 1972) pp. 75-94, and R. Cobb, 'The French Revolution and Private Life' in T. D. Williams, ed. *Historical Studies VIII: Papers read before the Irish Conference of Historians*, 29-30 May 1969, (Dublin 1971) pp. 3-30, p. 16.

⁴⁵ C. Langlois, 'Furet's Revolution', *F. H. S.*, vol. xvi, (1990) pp. 766-76, p. 770.

⁴⁶ Winter, *Sites of Memory*, A. Becker, *La guerre et la foi: de la mort à la mémoire 1914-1930*, (Paris, 1994) and M. Lagrée and J. Roche, *Tombes de Mémoire: la dévotion populaire aux victimes de la Révolution dans l'Ouest*, (Rennes, 1993)

ceremonies and customs that concern the commemoration of the dead in Catholic culture scarcely feature across most of this literature, obsessed as it is with what Jean-Claude Bonnet has described as the steady 'laïcisation de la mémoire' in modern France.⁴⁷ One looks in vain, for example, for a reference to religious icons in Agulhon's 'statuomanie' except in routine opposition to the images of the Revolutionary tradition, and the handful of articles that touch on this subject in Nora's massive *Lieux de Mémoire* merely confirm this overwhelming impression of neglect.⁴⁸ Indeed, for Avner Ben-Amos, religion is, quite simply, irrelevant to the remembrance of the dead, and his discussion of the culture of the Third Republic's commemorations concludes that 'even if he [the *Grand Homme*] was a Catholic, the religious aspect of the event was unimportant'.⁴⁹ Even if we accept this as true of the Third Republic, and this in itself seems questionable, can the same really be said of the men and women who packed into the church of Saint-Séverin and the cathedral of Saint-Jean to pay their respects to Charles Dusson and Jean-Denis Blanc in July 1789? Can their presence in a church, for a funeral mass, be discounted quite so easily, can the prayers that were said for the repose of Dusson's soul or the benediction archbishop Durfort performed over Blanc's coffin be so casually dismissed in the name of a later *laïcité*?

The complex, at first collaborative but later conflictual, relationship between religious belief and ritual, Revolutionary politics, and the remembrance of the dead is central to this study. By placing this constantly-changing relationship at the heart of this question, this work will draw upon the enormous existing scholarship on attitudes towards death in 18th century France. However, it will also challenge some of the assumptions that inform this scholarship. By examining the rôle religious convictions, ceremonies and customs played in Revolutionary commemoration, it will question some of the conclusions that Chaunu and Vovelle have inferred from their statistical studies of the wills of the Parisian and Provencal well-to-do, while also contesting Ariès' claim that the 'culte des morts' was somehow the prerogative of the

⁴⁷ J.-C. Bonnet, 'Naissance du Panthéon', *Poétique*, no. 33, (1978) pp. 46-65, p. 50.

⁴⁸ According to Agulhon, the Republic's rites of memory were explicitly conceived to commemorate an idealised Republican hero who 'ne participe ni de la sacralité religieuse, ne de la sacralité monarchique'. Agulhon, 'La "statuomanie" et l'histoire', p. 143.

⁴⁹ Ben-Amos, *Funerals, Politics and Memory*, p. 280.

post-Revolutionary generation.⁵⁰ It will examine how religious beliefs and rituals defined the remembrance of the Revolution's dead in 1789 and 1791, but also ask how these customary beliefs continued to shape the Revolution's rites of memory even after their ritual expression had been effectively proscribed during the Terror and severely curtailed thereafter. In a sense then, this is a history of revolutionary change, but it is also an attempt to understand the limits of cultural change in a time of revolution.

The commemoration of the dead raises many difficult questions. It asks the historian to explore the relationships between the public and the private, the community and the individual, political imperatives and emotional needs in a way that few other subjects do. In a time of prolonged political, social and cultural change, these questions can appear even more daunting, and some of them can never be fully answered. And yet, they are worth asking. Certainly, we will never entirely understand what Charles Dusson's funeral meant to every member of the congregation in Saint-Séverin in July 1789, and the full panoply of emotions that unveiling a village war-memorial evoked in *an II* will always elude us, but we can at least attempt to ask what commemoration meant to those who commemorated. We can at least pay the men and women who remembered the Revolution's dead, their dead, the respect of affording their intentions and reactions, their sense of duty towards the dead and their desire to comfort the living some of the attention that has normally been reserved for a Robespierre or a La Revellière.

In order to answer these questions, a broadly chronological approach appears to offer the most appropriate structure for this study. In part, such an approach offers the simplest means of charting how and why commemoration changed over the course of the 1790s. However, this choice also corresponds to a number of wider concerns. The forms Revolutionary remembrance took and the men, and they are almost always men, that the Revolutionaries chose to commemorate are simply too diverse to consider under any obvious thematic headings. No common denominator can connect

⁵⁰ P. Chaunu, *La Mort à Paris, 16e, 7e et 18e siècles*, (Paris, 1978) and M. Vovelle, *Piété baroque et déchristianisation en Provence au XVIIIe siècle*, (Paris, 1978 ed.) According to Ariès, the Napoleonic legislation on cemeteries and the establishment of Père Lachaise in 1804 constitute 'une sorte d'acte de fondation d'un culte nouveau, le culte des morts.' P. Ariès, *L'homme devant la mort*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1977 ed.) vol. ii, p. 226.

Charles Dusson, Jean-Denis Blanc, Voltaire, Marat or General Hoche other than their deaths, and the decision of others to honour them. For this reason, a chronological discussion seems preferable if only because the decision to impose a more thematic structure on Revolutionary commemoration would create distinctions, between the rhetoric and ritual of remembrance or between the commemoration of the politician and the *philosophe* for example, where none existed in practice. It would, more importantly, impose a quite artificial coherence on what was a constantly changing, sometimes contradictory and frequently chaotic cultural experience. To adopt such a schema, would, above all, be to overlook the continuity of concerns that drove Revolutionaries to honour their dead and the sheer contingency of the choices they made concerning who and how to commemorate. From the unexpected death or assassination to the casualties that followed the outbreak of another *journée*, these choices were rarely pre-meditated, but instead reacted to ever-changing circumstances, and only a chronological structure can really make sense of how those choices were made and what aims they served.

Chapter I

Présenter la vertu en action

In April 1791, the National Assembly solemnly installed Mirabeau in the new Panthéon. Voltaire followed soon afterwards, and the Panthéon quickly began to assume its modern shape, some men of letters, more republican worthies, a handful of scientists and technocrats. A prestigious gentleman's club for the Revolution's illustrious dead: no women need apply. Few events seem as representative of the course of the eighteenth century in France. A century's worth of desacralisation, laicisation, democratisation and resacralisation seems to converge with startling clarity in that one decree. Even more promisingly, the Assembly's decision seems, almost despite itself, to anticipate the contours of French politics for over a century to come. Deconsecrated and reconsecrated with each new régime, the Panthéon appears to incarnate the nineteenth-century's conflict between Church and State, a political weathervane perched decorously on the top of the Mont Sainte-Geneviève. Between 1791 and 1885, it changed hands no less than five times; and it took the passing of another colossus, Victor Hugo, and about two million mourners finally to establish the Republic's sovereignty over what Hugo himself had long before derided as 'le plus beau gâteau de Savoie qu'on ait jamais fait en pierre.'¹ The Panthéon was destined to become one of nineteenth century France's great symbolic battlegrounds, but for Owen Chadwick, its significance is even greater than this. According to Chadwick,

¹ V. Hugo, *Nôtre Dame de Paris*, (Paris, 1967 ed.) p. 157.

this tortuous history is 'a symbol of all our troubled intellectual history', an embodiment of an all-encompassing secularisation of the European mind.²

It is a heavy burden for one building to bear, but as France's realms of memory have come under ever-more detailed examination, so more and more historians have followed in Chadwick's footsteps. The symbolic resonance of the Panthéon, the search for its origins and the desire to create a coherent narrative of commemoration in French political culture have all drawn historians back to its Revolutionary foundation, and beyond that to the politics of memory in *ancien régime* France. And just as the radical luminaries of the 1880's summoned up the shades of Voltaire and Rousseau to legitimise Sainte-Geneviève's return to the Republican fold in 1885, so historians have naturally sought out continuities in their attempts to trace the genealogy of this republican shrine. It is an obvious temptation, but as a result, the meaning of remembrance in 18th century France has invariably been viewed through the prism of 19th and 20th century politics, of what it became rather than what it was. The values and conflicts embedded in the commemorations of the 19th century are re-invented as transcendent principles and refracted back onto an altogether different 18th century. Maurice Agulhon's assessment of the Third Republic's 'statuomanie' is explicit on this point: 'bref, l'idéologie implicite de la statuomanie, c'est l'humanisme libéral, dont plus tard la démocratie sera l'extension naturelle.'³ This may well be true of the festivities that enshrined Hugo, Zola, and Jaurès in the bosom of the *patrie*, but can the same be said of the eighteenth century's celebration of *le roi* Voltaire or *l'ami* Jean-Jacques?

For Jean-Claude Bonnet, the answer is an emphatic yes.⁴ Following in Agulhon's footsteps, and building upon the work of literary scholars such as Favre and Bénichou, Bonnet's study of commemoration in 18th century France emphasises the continuities between the language of memory in the *République des lettres* and the

² O. Chadwick, *The Secularisation of the European Mind in the Nineteenth century*, (Cambridge, 1975), p. 159.

³ Agulhon, 'La "statuomanie" et l'histoire', p. 143.

⁴ J.-C. Bonnet, *Naissance du Panthéon: essai sur le culte des grands hommes*, (Paris, 1998), 'Naissance du Panthéon', *Poétique*, no. 33, (1978) pp. 46-65 and 'Les Morts Illustres: oraison funèbre, éloge académique, nécrologie' in Nora, ed. *Les Lieux de Mémoire, La Nation*, vol. iii, pp. 217-241.

subsequent rôle of commemoration in the *République des instituteurs*.⁵ Arguing that the meaning of memory underwent a profound transformation in the decades preceding the Revolution, Bonnet enlists sources as diverse as the *philosophes*' musings on posterity, the *éloges* of provincial academies and the monarchy's *Série des Grands Hommes* as the heralds of the cult of great men that lies 'au coeur de notre imaginaire nationale.'⁶ Indeed for Bonnet, this 'engouement' with the *grand homme* is not simply a national peculiarity, but an explicitly republican ideal, which 'compose peu à peu un stock de discours où s'inventent la nation et la république.'⁷ This assertion of French particularism might be difficult to reconcile with the presence of so many Renaissance *uomini famosi* in so many Italian city squares or the vivid memorials of Westminster abbey, but this is a minor quibble. The inevitable corollary of this radical new 'discourse sur les morts' is a root and branch 'laïcisation de la mémoire', an unambiguous secularisation that tallies nicely with the steady dechristianisation of attitudes towards death that Vovelle and Chaunu uncovered in the wills of the Provencal and Parisian elite.⁸ Indeed, at its most sweeping, this argument even seems to prefigure the rather more rapid dechristianisation of *an II*. In short, the 'sacre du Roi' dutifully cedes to the 'sacre de l'écrivain' and the 'démocratie imaginaire' of the enlightenment's *sociétés de pensée* effortlessly paves the way for the *imaginaire révolutionnaire* of the year II.⁹

It is an ambitious argument, and an influential one. Bonnet's legacy can be seen in numerous works on eighteenth century political culture and the French commemorative experience, although in less capable hands, this line of thought can reach some alarming conclusions.¹⁰ For Jay Caplan, for instance, 'the poet Voltaire's symbolic coronation [on his return to Paris in 1778] eloquently testified to the almost total disappearance of the king as a symbolic force'.¹¹ Admittedly, Bonnet is not as reckless as this, and the apotheosis of 30 March 1778 does not lead towards the

⁵ P. Bénichou, *Le Sacre de l'Écrivain, 1750-1830: Essai sur l'avènement d'un pouvoir spirituel laïque dans la France moderne*, (Paris, 1973) and R. Favre, *La mort dans la Littérature et la Pensée française au Siècle des Lumières*, (Lyon, 1978)

⁶ Bonnet, *Naissance du Panthéon*, p. 10.

⁷ Bonnet, 'Les Morts Illustres', p. 226.

⁸ Bonnet, *Naissance du Panthéon*, pp. 50 and 53.

⁹ Bonnet, 'Les Morts Illustres', p. 226.

¹⁰ Bonnet's influence runs throughout, for example, Annie Jourdan's *Les Monuments de la Révolution* and Ben-Amos' *Funerals, Politics and Memory*.

¹¹ J. Caplan, *In the King's wake: post-absolutist culture in France*, (Chicago, 1999) p. 159.

execution of 21 January 1793 with quite the same inevitability, but it sometimes comes close. Voltaire's apotheosis in the Comédie Française may not explicitly presage the death of the king, but for Bonnet, the conflict between the Court and the city still defines the very nature of enlightened commemoration, and in this respect at least, his *éloges* represent a 'mémoire plus particulière et sélective, et de ce point de vue déjà républicaine.'¹²

A plethora of statues, busts and paintings seem to confirm the 'monumentalisation d'un discours' that Bonnet describes so persuasively, but this very proliferation of elegies and statues also begs the question whether a discourse can be set in tablets of stone, fixed indefinitely and passed on unchanged from generation to generation? If we can agree that the educated elites of 18th century France were fascinated by the exemplary image of the *homme illustre*, the wider ideological implications that Bonnet *et al* attribute to this affair are more open to question. In the first instance, this interpretation is based on a very narrow canon of enlightened works. This radical 'nouveau discours sur les morts' emerges fully armed and ready to do battle in the name of the Republic from the writings of a very select few, *philosophes* and academicians, the cream of the Parisian avant-garde. However, as Daniel Roche warns: 'enlightened opinion in general must not be confused with the views of the most advanced thinkers of the day'.¹³ And yet, this is precisely what much of the literature on 18th century commemoration does, as Diderot's oft-quoted assertion, 'la postérité pour la philosophe, c'est l'autre monde de l'homme religieux' becomes the battle cry of an entire generation eager to *écraser l'infâme*.¹⁴ Even if Diderot's private letters to Falconet do constitute the century's most exhaustive debate on the meaning of memory, do they really constitute the *zeitgeist* that historians such as Favre, Bonnet, or even Michel Vovelle take them for.¹⁵ Clearly, it would be wrong to veer towards the other extreme, and dismiss Diderot's obsession with posterity as the consequence of a tormented atheist's lonely struggle with his own mortality, but can one really assume that this desacralised vision of remembrance had any meaning outside the luxurious confines of the *salon d'Holbach*? For the most part, however,

¹² Bonnet, *Naissance du Panthéon*, p. 80.

¹³ D. Roche, *France in the Enlightenment*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1998) p. 588.

¹⁴ Diderot to Falconet, February 1766, in Diderot, 'Le Pour et le Contre ou Lettres sur la Postérité', in Diderot, *Oeuvres Complètes*, H. Dieckmann and J. Varloot, eds. vol. xv, (Paris, 1986) p. 33.

¹⁵ For such an assertion, see for example, M. Vovelle, *La Mentalité Révolutionnaire, Société et mentalité sous la Révolution Française*, (Paris, 1985) p. 127.

such questions have not troubled the historians of 18th century commemoration. On the contrary, they simply accept Diderot's views as somehow symptomatic of 'l'esprit du siècle' and move the argument on to its inevitable conclusion.¹⁶ In this quest for a single, unified narrative of commemoration stretching from the mid-eighteenth century to the present day, very little consideration is given to the different uses memory might be made to serve, or to how, or indeed, if a wider public assimilated these new ideas with older, more established attitudes. The prospect that these texts might be subject to the twin evils of *bricolage* and *braconnage* as practised by de Certeau's readers is never entertained.¹⁷ For the most part, such cumbersome questions simply do not arise; and the taut logic of the enlightened canon lumbers on. Despite its post-modern panache, this resolutely textual approach to the culture of commemoration looks suspiciously like a very traditional brand of intellectual history. Republicanised, democratised, and secularised, the complexities, inconsistencies and contradictions of the *ancien régime* debate on memory are overlooked in the name of a radical tradition that unites 'the party of humanity' across the centuries. The resulting vision of eighteenth-century culture seems a peculiarly static entity, ideologically coherent no doubt, but hopelessly monolithic as a result: a radical leviathan waiting sullenly for a Revolution to adopt it.

This is not to deny that the language of enlightened memory exerted an important influence on the evolution of Revolutionary remembrance; the flourishes, and frequently the clichés, that defined the rhetoric of remembrance in the 1770s surface too often in the 1790s to deny a certain continuity, but it is to insist that this language was a very flexible medium. 'Présenter la vertu en action' may have been the order of the day for Grégoire in 1793, just as it had been for Thomas twenty years earlier, but if the intellectual assumptions underpinning each were the same, Grégoire and Thomas were celebrating very different heroes, addressing very different audiences, and fighting very different battles.¹⁸ Circumstances, particularly when they come in the momentous form of 1789 or *an II*, and difference, the profound difference between Grégoire's world in 1793 and Thomas' in the 1770s cannot simply be erased

¹⁶ Bonnet, 'Naissance du Panthéon', *Poétique*, p. 46.

¹⁷ M. de Certeau, *L'Invention du Quotidien*, vol. i, (Paris, 1980) pp. 292-3

¹⁸ H. Grégoire, *Rapport sur les moyens de rassembler les matériaux nécessaires à former les Annales du Civisme*, (Paris, 1793) p. 8, and A.-L. Thomas, *Essai sur les Éloges* in A.-L. Thomas, *Œuvres*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1819 ed.) vol. i, p. 251.

in the name of a few borrowings. Rather than inventing a unified discourse of memory that leads inexorably from the triumph of Voltaire in 1778 to the pantheonisation of Mirabeau in 1791, and to Hugo in 1885, and on to that of Condorcet in 1989, the meaning of these events can only be uncovered by exploring the specificity of each. Rather than collapsing the difference between these worlds, one must look to an *ancien régime* and a Revolution where commemoration was a stake in quite distinct political and cultural conflicts. To appreciate the complex cultural legacy that shaped the Revolution's rites of memory, it is essential to look beyond the discourse of memory to the rituals and images that accompanied the remembrance of the dead during the *ancien régime*. As Mercier realised only too well, 'il existe un intervalle immense entre l'étude des livres et le commerce de la vie,' and it is to the contours of this 'intervalle' that the historian must turn in order to understand the influence of the past upon the Revolution.¹⁹ By examining the commemoration of Rousseau's memory at Ermenonville, the evolution of the academic *éloge* and the politics of commemorative art in *ancien régime* France, this chapter will explore the complex and sometimes contradictory legacy of the past on the development of Revolutionary remembrance.

After over a decade of dedicated planning and planting, the transformation of René-Louis de Girardin's estate from a miserable marsh into a luxuriant garden was finally completed in 1776. Having worked so hard to craft a natural look for the grounds of Ermenonville, it was now time to place his radical plans for the edification and improvement of the French countryside before the public at large: and his *De la Composition des Paysages* duly appeared the next year.²⁰ Denouncing the orderly parterres of André Le Nôtre's Versailles as a well-clipped abomination, Girardin yearned to bring nature back within the walls of the garden. Rather than manipulating and mutilating the environment, as in the classical French garden, he proposed, more modestly, to 'embellir, ou d'enrichir la nature' by working within the broad contours laid down by the existing topography.²¹ With one eye on English horticulturalists

¹⁹ L.-S. Mercier, *Le Nouveau Paris*, (Paris, 1996 ed.) p. 105.

²⁰ R. de Girardin, *De la Composition des Paysages sur le terrain ou des moyens d'embellir les campagnes autour des habitations, en joignant l'agréable à l'utile*, (Paris, 1777)

²¹ *De la Composition des Paysages*, p. 2.

such as Thomas Whately and William Shenstone, and another on the Elysium in Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse*,²² Girardin aimed to produce a seemingly untouched Arcadia, an idyll worthy of Poussin or Claude Lorraine, where one scrupulously planned scene led gracefully onto another, and each in turn harmonised with the surrounding landscape. In this relentless quest for the picturesque, even the neighbouring peasantry and their offspring were mobilised to charm the passer-by with the homely spectacle of their bucolic labours and virtuous fecundity.²³ The effect was idyllic; but it required a deft touch, and Girardin advised the reader to avoid any semblance of artifice, and instead strive to imitate 'une nature vierge et primitive.'²⁴ With its levelled hills, artificial lakes, meticulously planted glades, and earnestly babbling brooks, it did not seem to matter that this particular version of 'Nature' was just as contrived as Le Nôtre's: it gave the impression of pastoral authenticity, and that was all that mattered. Although he might not have appreciated the ironic tone with which it was delivered, Madame Roland's exclamation upon entering the grounds in the summer of 1784, 'voilà la nature', was exactly what Girardin would have hoped for.²⁵

Girardin's ideas on landscaping were not vastly original. Twenty years earlier, Marc-Antoine Laugier had expressed an identical dislike for the 'trop gêné et trop compassé' gardens of Versailles and much the same preference for 'la piquante bizarrerie de la nature', but Girardin's essay was different.²⁶ Few other writers expressed the prevailing taste for the picturesque with such panache, but more importantly, few other authors enjoyed the luxury of being able to put theory into practice on such a grand scale, and the grounds at Ermenonville offered stunning confirmation of Girardin's claims for the free-flowing delights of the *jardin anglais*. *De la Composition des Paysages* enjoyed a corresponding success. By 1805, it had

²² The connection with Shenstone is particularly marked: Girardin had visited Shenstone's *ferme ornée* at the Leasowes in the early 1760's, and his horticultural philosophy owed much to Shenstone's insistence that 'Art should never be allowed to set foot in the province of nature.' William Shenstone, *Unconnected Thoughts on Gardening*, in R. Dodsley, (ed.) *The Works in Verse and Prose of William Shenstone*, (London, 1764) vol. ii p. 84. The same thinking inspired the creation of Julie's garden in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. As she explained to Saint-Preux, her Élysée looked untended, but it was not: 'il est vrai que la nature a tout fait, mais sous ma direction, et il n'y a rien là que je n'aye ordonné.' Rousseau, *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, in Rousseau, *O. C.* vol. ii, (Paris, 1961) p. 472.

²³ *De la Composition des Paysages*, p. 54.

²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 63.

²⁵ Letter of 7 June 1784, *Lettres de Madame Roland: 1780-1793*, 2 vols. C. Perroud, ed. (Paris, 1900-2) vol. i, p. 442.

²⁶ M.-A. Laugier, *Essai sur l'Architecture*, (Paris, 1753) pp. 280 and 279.

gone through four French editions, and its influence was evident in the balmy glades and sylvan follies that sprang up in imitation of Ermenonville at châteaux all over France. Quaint cottages and Italian windmills provided weary patrician strollers with a moment's shade, and edifying inscriptions were engraved on the hastily raised ruins of antique temples. By the late 1780's, enigmatic obelisks and mock tombs had become the height of fashion, as in the Comte d'Artois' Bagatelle or the Princesse de Monaco's lush *vallée des tombeaux* at Betz.²⁷ At Méréville, the financier Laborde hired Hubert Robert in 1786 to design a similar park, complete with a monument dedicated to Captain Cook, while Labrière's blueprint for the duc d'Orléans estate at Gennevilliers incorporated a tomb dedicated to Petrarch's Laura, presumably to facilitate tearful reflection on the constancy of love.²⁸ Girardin's influence crossed borders too. *De la Composition des Paysages* was quickly translated into German and English and later appeared in Italian, and even inspired the horticultural endeavours of several reigning monarchs.²⁹ Emperor Joseph II and King Gustave III both visited Ermenonville to seek the marquis' advice, while closer to home, Marie-Antoinette was soon to be seen, dressed as a shepherdess, cavorting around a *hameau rustique* in the Trianon.³⁰ Less majestic souls were equally inspired. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's plans for a leafy island Elysium on the Seine near Neuilly owed much to Girardin's insights, as did the abbé Delille's poem of 1782, *Les Jardins, ou l'art d'embellir les paysages*.³¹ Inevitably, a few begrudgers mocked the 'désordre affecté' and 'chaos artificieux' of the gardens, or poked fun at the 'Brobdignaggian puerility' of the

²⁷ M. Thiéry, *Guide des Amateurs et des Étrangers voyageurs à Paris, ou description raisonnée de cette Ville, de sa Banlieue et de tout ce qu'elles contiennent de remarquable*. (Paris, 1787-8) vol. iii, p. 276.

²⁸ For Girardin's influence, see R. A. Etlin *The Architecture of Death: the Transformation of the Cemetery in Eighteenth Century Paris*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1984) and D. Wierbenson, *The Picturesque Garden in France*, (Princeton, 1978)

²⁹ These editions appeared as *Von Verschönerung der Natur*, (Leipzig, 1779), *An Essay on Landscape; or, on the means of improving and embellishing the country round our habitations*, (trans. D. Mathies) (London, 1783) and *Della composizione dei paesaggi*, (Milan, 1819)

³⁰ A. Martin-Decaen, *Le Dernier Ami de Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Le Marquis René de Girardin 1735-1808*, (Paris, 1912) pp. 141 and 144.

³¹ Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, J.-H., *Études de la Nature*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1784) vol. iii, pp. 271-99.

marquis' more outlandish ideas, but they remained an isolated minority.³² In terms of horticultural fashion, Ermenonville set the standard by which others were judged.³³

It might seem perverse to begin a discussion of the politics of memory in Revolutionary France with a tour around a lush aristocratic park, but this was no ordinary garden, and Girardin was no ordinary gardener. For all its many virtues, Girardin's garden might well have remained unvisited, and his essay unread but for one very timely twist of fate. Just a year after publishing *De la Composition des Paysages*, the marquis welcomed Jean-Jacques Rousseau to stay in one of the cottages on his estate. Fortunately for the marquis, less so for Rousseau, *l'ami Jean Jacques* promptly died of a stroke after only a month of bucolic bliss among an appreciative Girardin clan.³⁴ So, it was in early July 1778, after so many years of tortured wandering, that Rousseau was finally laid to rest after a solemn moonlit ceremony on the *île des peupliers* in the grounds of Ermenonville. Only too well aware of the importance of the remains entrusted to him, Girardin commissioned a simple but elegant tomb dedicated to l'Homme de la Nature et de la Vérité.³⁵ (See Figure 1) Designed by the master of modish melancholy, Hubert Robert, and with Le Sueur's bas-reliefs depicting a mother reading *Émile* while nursing her infant, the tomb, with its charming, shady setting, was an instant success. Even an arch pragmatist like Arthur Young was struck by the 'melancholy' air of the scene, and judged it 'as well imagined and as well executed as could be wished.'³⁶ Rousseau remained there until October 1794, when the Thermidorean régime suddenly took the step that all its predecessors had balked at, and finally decided to ship Jean-Jacques back to Paris to be reburied in the Revolutionary Panthéon. Ermenonville would never be the same again.

³² Anon. *Lettre écrite par une jeune dame de Paris à son retour d'Ermenonville à l'une de ses amies à la campagne*, (Amsterdam, 1780) B. N. Lk7/2628, p. 9. Horace Walpole's Swiftian put-down was occasioned by Girardin's dislike of spires because they 'semblent vouloir poignarder les nuages.' Horace Walpole to Mr. Mason, 21 January 1783, in Walpole, *Correspondence*, vol. 29, p. 283.

³³ A measure of Ermenonville's reputation is the entire chapter devoted to its happy combination of 'un pays en partie champêtre et en partie sauvage' in Jean-Marie Morel's *Théorie des Jardins*, (Paris, 1776) p. 240. No other garden received such lavish attention in the work.

³⁴ For Rousseau's final days at Ermenonville, see M. Cranston, *The Solitary Self: Jean-Jacques Rousseau in Exile and Adversity*, (London, 1997) pp. 186-8 and Martin-Decaen, *op cit*, pp. 74ff.

³⁵ R.-L. de Girardin, *Promenade ou Itinéraire des Jardins d'Ermenonville auquel on a joint vingt-cinq de leurs principales vues dessinées et gravées par Mérigot fils*, (Paris, 1788)

³⁶ A. Young, *Travels during the years 1787, 1788, 1789, undertaken more particularly with a view of ascertaining the cultivation, wealth, resources and National prosperity of the Kingdom of France*, 2 vols. (London, 1794 ed.) vol. i, p. 73.



Figure 1, Mérigot fils, 'L'Isle des Peupliers', from Girardin, *Promenade ou Itinéraire des jardins d'Ermenonville*, (Paris, 1788) plate 9.

The presence of Jean-Jacques' tomb had been the making of Ermenonville, but in one sense, it was just gilding the lily.³⁷ From its very inception in the 1760's, the estate had been designed as a vast garden of remembrance, a pastoral *place d'émulation* laden with 'monumens consacrés à la reconnaissance' dedicated to an assortment of friends, pastoral poets, and *philosophers*.³⁸ For Girardin, the 'utile et l'agréable' were inextricably linked, and as a result, the follies of Ermenonville were positively weighted down with moral gravity. Far removed from the frivolous pagodas of rococo *chinserie* or the spectacular *fabriques* of so many aristocratic parks, the obelisks, memorials and urns that dotted the landscape at Ermenonville were carefully calculated to inspire noble deeds and elevate the soul. Everything in the garden, from its architectural embellishments to the inscriptions that adorned them, was destined to

³⁷ According to Mme Roland, 'si Jean-Jacques n'en eût pas fait la réputation, je doute qu'on se fût jamais détourné pour aller le visiter.' *Lettres de Madame Roland*, vol. i, p. 443.

³⁸ The English elegist William Shenstone featured prominently here, as did an obelisk dedicated to the pastoral poets Theocritus, Thomson, and Gessner.

recall the tender memory of departed friends and the virtues of great men.³⁹ Thus, a deliberately unfinished temple was raised to philosophy, with each of its columns inscribed with the names of great thinkers 'qui fut utile à ses semblables'. With Newton, Penn, Descartes, Montesquieu, and Voltaire already engraved there, Girardin promised that the very thought of meriting such a column would spur future generations on to humanitarian greatness.⁴⁰ The *philosophes* were granted their allotted place in Girardin's design, but everything else at Ermenonville conspired to consecrate the memory of Jean-Jacques. Indeed, long before Rousseau ever set foot on the estate, the focal point of the park was intended to be a simple memorial 'consacré à la mémoire d'un homme dont la génie a éclairé le monde', where one could meditate in tranquillity upon the virtues of Nature and Truth.⁴¹ Girardin was clearly thinking of Rousseau when he wrote this in 1776, but he could hardly have anticipated that one day Jean-Jacques would be buried on the very spot where he had planned to raise his 'petit monument philosophique.'

Ermenonville was an act of homage to Rousseau's memory, but if the scale of Girardin's gesture was unique, the extent of his devotion was not. Voltaire and Montesquieu had admirers, but as Grimm ruefully observed in 1770: 'Jean-Jacques n'a point d'admirateurs, il a des dévots'.⁴² The explanation for this unprecedented level of devotion is clear; as Darnton suggests, Rousseau had quite simply 'transformed the relation between writer and reader, between reader and text'.⁴³ Unlike the worthy, but somehow distant doyens of the enlightened salons, Rousseau had aspired 'en quelque façon rendre mon âme transparente aux yeux du lecteur', and in so doing, he had established a cathartic intimacy with his readers that few other writers had even dreamt of.⁴⁴ Jean-Jacques demanded the reader's attention and empathy as never before, but in return he seemed to offer redemption, an escape from the spiritual void that the *philosophes* had done so much to create. For Charles Panckouche, reading Rousseau was like a latter day Pauline conversion:

Depuis longtemps, livré aux trompeuses illusions d'une impétueuse jeunesse, ma raison

³⁹ *De la Composition des Paysages*, pp. 44, and 70.

⁴⁰ *Promenade ou Itinéraire des Jardins d'Ermenonville*, p. 39.

⁴¹ *De la Composition des Paysages*, p. 49.

⁴² *Corr. Litt.* February 1770, vol. viii, p. 463.

⁴³ R. Darnton, 'Readers respond to Rousseau: the fabrication of romantic sensitivity' in R. Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and other episodes in French Cultural History*, (London, 1984) p. 222.

⁴⁴ Rousseau, *Confessions*, in O. C. (Paris, 1967) vol. i, p. 175.

s'égarioit dans la recherche de la vérité. Je cherchois le bonheur et il fuyoit... Une voix puissante s'élevoit du fonds de mon cœur, la nature se faisoit entendre, mes remords étoient cuisans; mais la mal étoit trop enraciné.... Il falloit un dieu et un dieu puissant pour me tirer de ce précipice et vous étés, Monsieur, le dieu qui venait d'opérer ce miracle. La lecture de votre Héloïse vient d'achever ce que vos autres ouvrages avoient déjà commencés... Depuis cette heureuse Lecture, je brûle de l'amour de la vertu, mon cœur que j'avois cru épuisé est plus échauffé que jamais. Le sentiment a repris sa place.⁴⁵

Panckouche's Damascene experience was by no means unique, and for this reason, Rousseau's demise came as a shattering blow to many of his readers.⁴⁶ It was experienced, not simply as the death of a distant celebrity, but as the loss of a friend, a trusted confidant, and an inspiration. In marked contrast to Voltaire, who had died only a few weeks earlier, Rousseau's death had a private and very personal effect that transcended the predictable attributes of the exemplary *grand homme*. Few wept for *le roi Voltaire*, but the tears that were shed when Julie died were shed once more on hearing of her creator's passing. For Manon Philipon, the news was heartbreaking, and she confided her feelings to a friend:

Jean-Jacques est mort; cette nouvelle me fut annoncée hier à dîner. Je sentis aussitôt mon appétit se fermer, mon cœur se serrer malgré moi... Je chérissais en lui l'ami de l'humanité, son bienfaiteur et le mien, il n'est plus, cette idée me fait verser des larmes d'attendrissement qu'il n'est pas en mon pouvoir de retenir.⁴⁷

Unlike the more conventional heroes of the *République des Lettres*, Rousseau made a profound impact on his public: an impact that can be measured in the hours that Jean Ranson, the Protestant merchant of La Rochelle, spent gazing at the engraving of the *île des peupliers* that hung on his study wall.⁴⁸

Ranson never saw Ermenonville, but many others did. From the very moment of Rousseau's death, visitors flocked to pay their respects at the *île des peupliers*. Virtually overnight, this 'lieu enchanté' became a shrine for the generation that had discovered the joys of motherhood and the ecstasy of tears with Jean-Jacques. Hoards of overwrought admirers descended daily on the park, clutching tear-stained copies of *Émile* and *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, anxious to pay their last respects to one who had

⁴⁵ Charles-Joseph Panckouche to Rousseau, 10th February 1761, letter 1278, in *Correspondance Complète de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, (Geneva, 1969) vol. viii, p. 78.

⁴⁶ On the relationship between Rousseau and his readers, see in particular, Darnton, 'Readers respond to Rousseau' and C. Blum, *Rousseau and the Republic of Virtue: the Language of Politics in the French Revolution*, (Ithaca, 1986)

⁴⁷ *Lettres de Madame Roland*, Nouvelle Série, 2 vols. C. Perroud, ed. (Paris, 1913-15) vol. ii, p.291.

⁴⁸ For Ranson, see Darnton, 'Readers respond to Rousseau', p. 231.

'exalté mes sens, et m'ont inspiré la vénération la plus profonde.'⁴⁹ Frugal moonlit picnics by the lakeside accompanied selected readings of Saint-Preux's letters to Julie, and one duchess even completed her tour of the grounds in appropriately *rousseauiste* sabots, albeit lined with sheepskin.⁵⁰ Best of all, entrance was free, although this hardly mattered to the smart set who could afford the time and money to make the trip in the first place, and within a few years, Métra estimated, a little optimistically, that:

déjà la moitié de la France s'est transporté à Ermenonville pour y visiter la petite isle qui lui est consacré, les amis de ses mœurs et de sa doctrine renouvellement même chaque année ce petit voyage philosophique.⁵¹

It was to such true believers that Girardin, or perhaps his son Stanislas, the authorship is unclear, addressed a lavishly illustrated guidebook, published in 1788 at the daunting price of 18 livres.⁵² In the 1770's, the garden had been conceived as a sequence of distinct but interconnected tableaux, but in this new *Promenade ou Itinéraire des Jardins d'Ermenonville*, a stroll through the grounds had become little more than the prelude to an emotional crescendo on the *banc des mères* facing Rousseau's tomb in the middle of the lake. Urging his readers to visit and 'contemplez dans la sîlence d'une belle nuit,' partly no doubt to enhance the melancholic intensity of the experience, but also to avoid the presence of crowds, Girardin promised that, here, they could 'laissez, laissez couler vos larmes, jamais vous n'en aurez versé de plus délicieuses.'⁵³

Weep these unhappy pilgrims most certainly did. After all, Rousseau had taught them the modern language of mourning in the final letters of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, and in the midst of Girardin's idyllic *jardin anglais*, the pre-Revolutionary ritual of remembrance achieved its most ecstatic raptures.⁵⁴ Tears were the hallmark of the truly sensitive soul, and they flowed abundantly on Rousseau's tomb. Flowers too, and when the abbé Brizard and Baron Cloots visited in July 1783, they scattered rose

⁴⁹ *Corr. Litt.* juillet 1778, vol. xii, p. 412.

⁵⁰ For Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's picnics and the Duchess de Villars's footwear, see A. Monglond, *Le Prérromantisme Français*, (Paris, 1969) 2 vols, vol. ii, p. 46, and Martin-Decaen, *op cit*, p. 155.

⁵¹ *Correspondance Secrète*, ii, p. 324, cited in Monglond, *Le Prérromantisme Français*, vol. ii, p. 45.

⁵² The authorship remains a moot point, and the literature on Ermenonville is equally divided on the matter.

⁵³ *Promenade ou Itinéraire des Jardins d'Ermenonville*, p. 24.

⁵⁴ See for example, Claire's visit to the grave of Julie, where 'je me sens entraînée... j'approche en frissonnant... je crains de fouler cette terre sacrée... je crois la sentir palpiter et frémir sous mes pieds, j'entends murmurer une voix plaintive! Claire, ô Claire où es-tu? Que fais-tu loin de ton amie?' *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, J.-J. Rousseau, *Oeuvres Complètes*, vol. ii, p. 745.

petals in order to expiate the memory of so many cruel slanders while the good abbé burned a copy of Diderot's scurrilous *Essai sur la vie de Sénèque* before Rousseau's tomb.⁵⁵ Here, in Ermenonville, one could truly revel in the twin delights of 'un attendrissement mêlé de vénération', but while visitors marvelled at the unspoilt beauty of the grounds; it was, as Girardin knew only too well, the *île des peupliers* that marked the climax of their visit to Arcadia.⁵⁶ The sight of Rousseau's final resting place had a profoundly moving, almost sacramental, effect on many of those who visited the park, and Germaine de Staël was not alone in experiencing a 'sentiment religieux' while crossing the lake; Roucher wept 'des pleurs religieux' and Arsène Thiébaud was seized by an overpowering feeling of 'saint respect' upon reaching the tomb.⁵⁷ For the true devotee, the visit to Ermenonville was a modern pilgrimage; a deeply moving experience that combined the conventional impact of the exemplary monument with the profound sense of sympathy that Rousseau had laboured so assiduously to cultivate with his public. Visitors identified with his tortured virtue, and strove to emulate it, sobbing out their vows to be worthy of Jean-Jacques' example; swearing 'par ses mânes respectables de suivre et d'éterniser les principes sublimes de sa morale.'⁵⁸ The effect could be almost miraculous. At the mere touch of Rousseau's snuffbox, Cloots felt his soul purified, and Mirabeau expected no less from the sight of his mentor's grave. As he told a friend in 1780:

Vous tâchez d'imiter Jean-Jacques? Oh, si vous eussiez jamais eu qu'une telle émulation, quel homme vous seriez! Ce Jean-Jacques est un homme sublime et un vertueux homme, quand vous pourrez, pleurer sur sa tombe; je vous y mènerai peut-être, et vous en reviendrez meilleur.⁵⁹

Naturally, some enthusiasts went too far. Arsène Thiébaud lost all control of himself on finally reaching the hallowed site, and one poor unfortunate even chose the spot to

⁵⁵ Brizard subsequently co-edited a lavish edition of Rousseau's works with Louis-Sébastien Mercier in the early 1790's. For his visit to Ermenonville, see his *Pèlerinage à Ermenonville au mois de juillet 1783 aux manes de J. J. Rousseau*, B. N. ms. f.345.

⁵⁶ Métra, *Correspondance Secrète*, vol. ii. p. 647, cited in A. Ridehlagh, 'Preromantic Attitudes and the Birth of a Legend: French Pilgrimages to Ermenonville 1778-1789', *S. V. E. C.* vol. 215, (1982) pp. 231-52, p. 237.

⁵⁷ G. de Staël, *Lettres sur les ouvrages et le caractère de J. J. Rousseau*, (Paris, 1788) p. 125, M. Roucher, *Les Mois*, p. 86, and A. Thiébaud, *Voyage à l'Isle des Peupliers*, (Paris, an VII) p. 51.

⁵⁸ Anon., *Voyage à Ermenonville, ou lettre sur la translation de J. J. Rousseau au Panthéon*, (Paris, an III) p. 14.

⁵⁹ Cloots was so moved that he left an inscription on the hallowed object after his visit: 'Mes doigts ont touché cette tabatière - Mon cœur en a tressailli et mon âme en est devenue plus pure.' F. -Y. Besnard, *Souvenirs d'un nonagénaire*, (Paris, 1880) vol. ii, p. 12. Mirabeau, cited in A. Vincent-Buffault, *Histoire des larmes, XVIIIe XIX siècles*, (Paris, 1986) p. 21.

take his own life in 1791.⁶⁰ This was carrying matters to extremes, but in a sense, such outward anguish signified the inner torments that were the defining feature of the sensitive soul. Rousseau's admirers came expecting nothing less than an epiphany: it was their right, and they left, as one visitor declared, 'avec l'impression profonde de la nécessité d'être bon pour être heureux.'⁶¹

Of course, not all visitors were so moved. Madame de Genlis scoffed at the contrived melancholia of the scene, demanding dryly: 'sauvons nous de ces lieux, il n'y a que des tombeaux et j'ai peur des revenants.'⁶² However, such sarcasm would have been anathema to the many visitors who were genuinely, if a little theatrically, inspired by a heartfelt 'dévotion à la mémoire du saint philosophe.'⁶³ And yet, as the fame of Girardin's gardens spread, so the *île des peupliers* rapidly became a spot for less exalted outings, attracting tourists drawn by glowing reviews in up-to-the-minute guidebooks. Dézallier d'Argenville's authoritative *Voyage pittoresque des environs de Paris* waxed lyrical about the beauty and variety of the grounds, while Thiéry's *Guide des Amateurs et des Étrangers voyageurs à Paris* urged polite excursionists to visit its enchanting grottos and balmy glades, observing, almost as an aside, that Rousseau's grave 'ajoute à l'intérêt que le voyageur *Philosophe* prendre à Ermenonville.' Even then, this unique recommendation paled in comparison to the plaudits lavished on the comte d'Artois' Bagatelle.⁶⁴ By 1787, Ermenonville was most definitely on the tourist map; but if these guidebooks offer any insights into the expectations of its visitors, then paying homage to Jean-Jacques came relatively low down their list of priorities. His tomb was an added bonus, of course, but in the midst of so many other attractions, it was no longer the focal point that it had been designed to be.

⁶⁰ 'Je ne fus point le maître du transport qui m'agitait, et des larmes s'échappèrent de mes yeux... Terre heureuse! M'criai-je en me jetant à genoux, je te salue... o tombe sacrée.' Thiébaud, *Voyage à l'Isle des Peupliers*, p. 52. The suicide was reported in *Le Décade Philosophique*, vol. iii, p. 104.

⁶¹ Anon., *Voyage à Ermenonville*, (Paris, an III) p. 16.

⁶² cited in Martin-Decaen, *op cit*, p. 146.

⁶³ *Corr. Lit.*, juin 1780, vol. xii, p. 406.

⁶⁴ A.-N. Dézallier d'Argenville, *Voyage pittoresque des environs de Paris, ou description des maisons royales, châteaux et autres lieux de plaisance situés à quinze lieues aux environs de cette ville*, (Paris, 1779 ed.) B. N. Lk7/7757 pp. 445-50, and M. Thiéry, *Guide des Amateurs et des Étrangers voyageurs à Paris, ou description raisonnée de cette Ville, de sa Banlieue et de tout ce qu'elles contiennent de remarquable*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1787-8) vol. iii, p. 231. For Thiéry's reaction to Bagatelle, see p. 276.

In the space of a few years, the *île des peupliers* had become just another curiosity along the sightseers' crowded itinerary. One visit in particular seems symptomatic of this symbolic devaluation. On the 14th of June 1780, a convoy of five carriages and their outriders carried the Queen, the King's brothers, their wives and an impressive retinue to Ermenonville. Naturally, Girardin was on hand to conduct a tour of the grounds, and the royal party spent several hours soaking up the atmosphere of the gardens. Some might have seen this visit as a sign of changing attitudes at Court, but others were less convinced. Meister, for one, was sceptical of the royal visitors' commitment to the cause:

La reine a été voir ces jours passés les jardins d'Ermenonville, accompagnée de toute la cour... On a considéré le tombeau, on en a trouvé l'architecture simple et de bon goût, le site des lieux l'entourent d'une mélancolie douce et romanesque, et l'on a paru s'occuper ensuite d'autres objets, sans avoir marqué aucune espèce d'intérêt pour le souvenir de l'homme auquel ce monument a été érigé.⁶⁵

How many others showed a similar indifference to the memory of the great man? It is, obviously, impossible to say, but it seems probable that such self-indulgent excursions became increasingly common. Just as Girardin's garden of remembrance had become a prototype for a host of less high-minded patrician pleasure parks, so the pilgrims to Rousseau's tomb now jostled for space on the *banc des mères* alongside bored grandees and bemused gentlemen on the Grand Tour.⁶⁶ Although many still arrived for only the most elevated of reasons, countless others were drawn by unadorned curiosity, or more prosaically, by the prospect of a pleasant stroll in the countryside. Inevitably, this influx of passing trade did the local economy no harm. The village innkeeper, Antoine Maurice, did particularly well out of Ermenonville's new status as a place of pilgrimage, while Thérèse Levasseur, Rousseau's evidently unsentimental partner of many years, was not above auctioning off his belongings when times were tough, but the popularisation and consequent commercialisation of Rousseau's memory left many observers cold.⁶⁷ As one disillusioned young visitor complained: 'd'autres Oisifs y arrivent aussi parce qu'ils entendent dire que c'est la

⁶⁵ *Corr. Litt.* juin 1780, vol. xii, p. 406.

⁶⁶ Arthur Young, although taken with the layout of the gardens, remained singularly unmoved by the more melodramatic aspects of the visit, while Le Tourneur made his first visit in the company of two young English travellers. Young, *Travels in France*, op cit, and Le Tourneur, *Voyage à Ermenonville*. In 1782, the abbé Delille lamented the 'artifice à la fois impuissant et grossier' of these 'monuments dont la ruine feinte.' Delille, *Les jardins ou L'art d'embellir les paysages*, (Hambourg, 1795 ed.) p. 96.

⁶⁷ On Maurice's exploitation of passing trade, and his accounts of Thérèse's financial (and amorous) peccadilloes, see Besnard, *Souvenirs d'un nonagénaire*, vol. ii, pp. 5-8.

mode. Vous savez que nous sommes, à tous égards, des moutons.⁶⁸ By 1789, Ermenonville had become a victim of its own success, complete with all the usual paraphernalia of modern tourism: souvenirs, traffic congestion and graffiti.⁶⁹

Even if the tearful devotees of Jean-Jacques did outnumber the mere sightseers at the *île des peupliers*, and there is little reason to think they did, can any broader political implications be drawn from this most evocative of eighteenth century *lieux de mémoire*? Ermenonville certainly charmed many passionate disciples of Jean-Jacques who would eventually become equally ardent apostles of the Revolutionary cause, but the visit to his grave was by no means a radical prerogative. For every Sylvain Maréchal who mourned 'le défenseur incorruptible des saints droits de l'humanité' there was also a Madame de Genlis, a Comte de Provence and a Comte d'Artois, and the future Louis XVIII and Charles X were not renowned for their espousal of *la volonté générale*.⁷⁰ Between these two extremes was the endless procession of ordinary readers who came to pay their respects to a favourite author and a dear, departed friend, and it was this Jean Jacques, the creator of *Émile* and author of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, rather than the visionary of the *Contrat Social*, that Ermenonville conjured up for an appreciative audience.⁷¹ From Girardin's *mise en scène* to Le Sueur's sentimental bas-reliefs, everything at Ermenonville was orientated towards commemorating this particular version of Rousseau. The garden was a paean to the long-suffering, sensitive soul communing with Nature, the embodiment of a deeply affecting, but decidedly vague, species of virtue that taught mothers the meaning of parenthood and lovers the value of sacrifice, and invited the beholder to imitate his ethereal example. Less a political messiah, than a mentor who mapped out a path towards self-discovery and personal fulfilment, the entire Ermenonville experience was a hymn to this particular, very private, vision of Rousseau.

⁶⁸ Anon. *Lettre écrite par une jeune dame de Paris à son retour d'Ermenonville à l'une de ses amies à la campagne*, (Amsterdam, 1780) p. 6.

⁶⁹ For complaints of the traffic converging on Ermenonville's poor roads, *ibid.*, p. 7. Girardin eventually had to close off access to the tomb itself because of the accumulation of graffiti on it, Le Tourneur, *Voyage à Ermenonville*, p. 146. By 1795, the vandals who had defaced Rousseau's tomb a decade earlier had been replaced by iconoclasts of a more patriotic variety, as Joseph Michaud reported having seen the names of Shenstone and Thompson erased from the park's monuments. *Décade Philosophique*, vol. iii, p. 106.

⁷⁰ S. Maréchal, *Le Tombeau de Jacques Rousseau, stances par M. P. Sylvain M...*, (Paris, 1779) B. N. Ye/27267.

⁷¹ As Germaine de Staël remarked, quotations from Rousseau were inscribed on stones and trees right across the park, but the vast majority of them were drawn from *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. de Staël, *Lettres sur les ouvrages et le caractère de J. J. Rousseau*, p. 125.

Commemoration was central to Girardin's Arcadian project. It invaded the idealised landscape of the ancien régime, and transformed it into a moralising idyll; but if the tomb on *île des peupliers* was unique, the ideas and sentiments that underpinned Girardin's design were not. Enlightened France was obsessed with the commemoration of the dead, and a whole constellation of typically enlightened concerns came into sharp focus along the estate's winding paths. The idyllic setting, the aesthetics of ruins and Girardin's heady combination of insistent didacticism and lachrymose sentimentality all contributed to the garden's appeal, but it was the century's faith in the moral resonance of the *grand homme* as an *exemplum virtutis* that had placed Ermenonville so firmly on the map. By the 1780's, the celebration and commemoration of *le grand homme* was an endlessly repeated theme in literature and the arts; it attracted the attentions of writers and poets, artists and architects, all eager to serve virtue by encouraging its emulation. Even those whose artistic vision was diametrically opposed to Girardin's romanticised garden of remembrance shared the same moral goal. As Boullée had argued in defence of his abstract *architecture des ombres*:

Il est évident que le but qu'on propose, lorsqu'on élève ces sortes de Monuments, est de perpétuer la mémoire de ceux auxquels ils sont consacrés... et de ramener par conséquent l'homme à des idées morales.⁷²

Boullée's plans for immense memorials to Newton and Turenne were all conceived with this aim in mind, and so were many other less distinguished designs. (See Figure 2) Indeed, the entire century echoed with calls for a French Elysium, a French Panthéon, or a French Parnasse to honour men of virtue and 'animer les hommes à travailler pour l'utilité et la gloire de l'État.'⁷³ Girardin's garden of remembrance seemed to answer some of these calls. And yet, the ambiguities that envelop the visit to Ermenonville are a salutary warning against assuming too much from this fixation with the moral potential embodied in what the marquis de Villette described as 'le spectacle d'un corps mort.'⁷⁴ For the educated classes, commemoration had become,

⁷² E. L. Boullée, *Architecture: Essai sur l'Art*, (Helen Rosenau ed.) (London, 1953) p. 83.

⁷³ E. Titon du Tillet, *Description du Parnasse Français... Suivie d'une liste Alphabetique des Poètes et des Musiciens rassemblés sur ce monument*, (Paris, 1727) p. xii.

⁷⁴ C. de Villette, *Journal de Paris*, no. 248, September 1785, p. 1024.

quite literally, part of the cultural landscape of *ancien régime* France, but in so doing, the language and imagery of memory had become a commonplace, open to multiple meanings and infinite manipulation. In order to understand how this process occurred and what its implications were, we must turn to the evolution of the two foremost idioms of enlightened remembrance, the academic *éloge* and the art and architecture of commemoration.

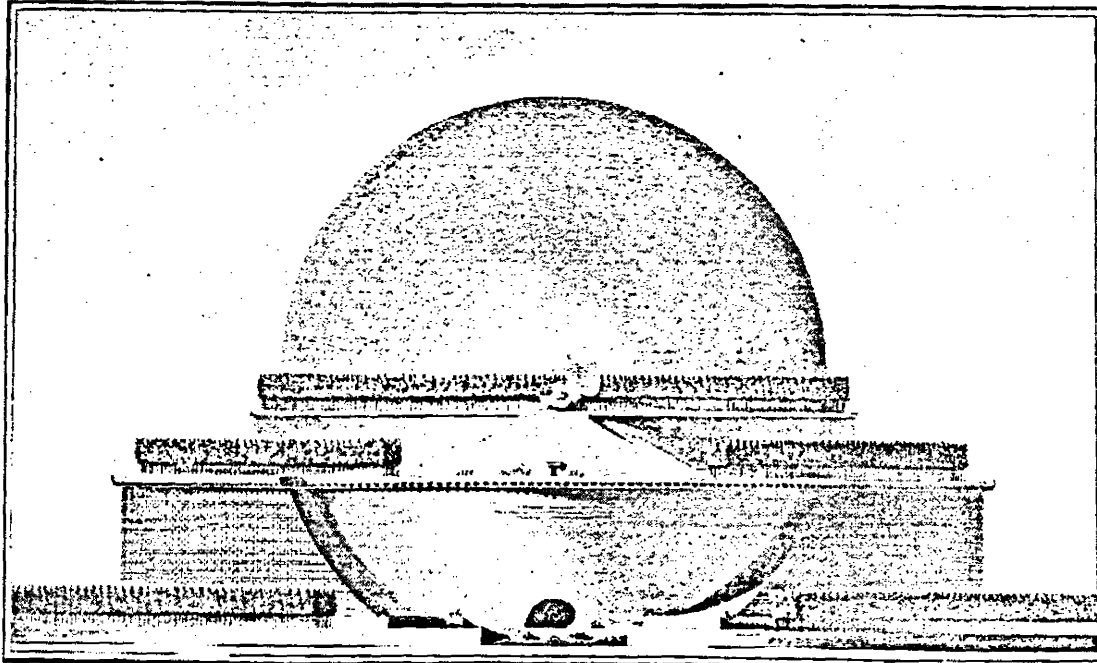


Figure 2. Boulée, 'Plan du cénotaphe de Newton'. Boulée, *Architecture: Essai sur l'Art*. (Helen Rosenau, ed.) (London, 1953 ed.) plate 7.

The academic *éloge* lies at the very heart of both the enlightenment debate on memory and the historiography of commemoration in eighteenth century France. It formed the cornerstone of the *philosophes*' attempts to define a code of conduct for the man of letters, and represents the most consistent attempt to honour his contribution to society. As a genre, the *éloge* had a long pedigree, stretching back to the foundation of the Royal academies, where it constituted an obligatory, if sometimes implausible, element of every new academician's reception speech. However, like the institution itself, the traditional *éloge* was not held in very high regard by most *philosophes*, and Montesquieu's disdain for the Academic 'fureur de panégyrique' was widely shared in enlightened circles.⁷⁵ Fontenelle's tenure as secretary of the *Académie des*

⁷⁵ Montesquieu, *Les Lettres Persanes*, (Paris, 1973 ed.) letter lxxiii, pp. 186-7.

Sciences did begin a process of reform,⁷⁶ but despite his best efforts, the *éloge* never fully emerged from under Bossuet's formidable shadow until 1758, when Duclos persuaded the *Académie Française* to devote its annual *prix d'éloquence* to the praise of great men.⁷⁷ Duclos' initiative was very much in keeping with his long running attempts to re-define the rôle of the intellectual within French society, but it also, as Bonnet has argued, represented a defining moment in the fortunes of the *éloge*.⁷⁸ From this point onwards, Duclos, and his successor as *secrétaire-perpétuel* of the Academy, d'Alembert, bombarded the provinces with model *éloges*, theoretical essays on the genre, and assorted missives to encourage their counterparts in the country to adopt their vision of the *éloge* as a template for academic oratory.⁷⁹ Their colleagues in the royal academies of Science and Medicine, Condorcet and Vicq d'Azir, followed suit, diffusing a new, more militant model of the savant to a wide public.⁸⁰ Over the course of the 1760s, this hitherto insignificant genre was transformed into what Roche has described as a 'partie intégrante de l'idéologie des talents', but perhaps more importantly, singing the praises of 'les bienfaiteurs de l'humanité' also came to be recognised as the principal path to greatness in the Republic of Letters.⁸¹

With the support of the Academies, 'parler à la postérité de ce qui a été grand ou utile' offered the aspiring litterateur an opportunity to mark his mark in the world of letters, and Antoine-Léonard Thomas did just that.⁸² Winner of the *Académie Française's* *prix d'éloquence* on five successive occasions between 1760 and 1765, Thomas rose from provincial obscurity to gain a place among the *immortels* on the strength of his

⁷⁶ For Fontenelle's influence, see J. Kapp, 'Les Qualités du Scientifique et le Prestige Social des Sciences dans les éloges Académiques de Fontenelle,' in *Fontenelle: Actes du Colloque tenu à Rouen, octobre 1987*, (Paris, 1989) pp.441-53.

⁷⁷ D'Alembert, 'Éloge de Mongin' in d'Alembert, *O.C.* vol. iii, p. 333, and Thomas, *Essai sur les Éloges*, p. 251.

⁷⁸ C. P. Duclos, *Considérations sur les Mœurs de ce Siècle*, (Paris, 1971 ed.) see in particular, pp. 89, 90 and 92. Bonnet claims that this marks the point at which a 'nouveau discours sur les morts' emerges. Bonnet, *Naissance du Panthéon*, p. 10.

⁷⁹ For d'Alembert's thoughts on the *éloge*, see his *Réflexions sur les Éloges Académiques* in d'Alembert *O. C.* vol. ii, pp. 151-61, and essay on *Éloges Académiques*, in *O. C.* vol. iv, pp. 535-538.

⁸⁰ For the 'fonction militante' of Vicq d'Azir's *éloges*, see D. Roche, 'Talents, Raison et Sacrifice: l'image du médecin des Lumières d'après les Éloges de la Société royale de médecine (1776-1789)', *Annales E. S. C.* (1977) pp. 866-886, p. 868.

⁸¹ D. Roche, *Le Siècle des Lumières en Province: Académies et Académiciens Provinciaux; 1680-1789*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1989 ed.) vol. i, p. 168, and d'Alembert, 'Éloge de Montesquieu', in d'Alembert, *Oeuvres Complètes*, vol. iii, pp. 440.

⁸² A.-L. Thomas, 'Éloge de Maurice, Comte de Saxe', in Thomas, *Oeuvres*, (Amsterdam, 1774 ed.) vol. iii, p. 5.

éloges of great men.⁸³ The foremost practitioner of this very fashionable genre, he was also its chief theorist, and his *Essai sur les Éloges* became required reading for a host of budding authors, keen to emulate his celebrated style, and perhaps just as eager to imitate his sensational success.⁸⁴ If the *éloge* came of age in 1758, it underwent an 'espèce de révolution' under Thomas.⁸⁵ Repudiating the ever-present 'terreur religieuse' of the classical *oraison funèbre*, he set his sights firmly on this world, not the next, and declared the first duty of the eulogist to be:

utile... C'est aux vivants qu'il faut parler, c'est dans leur âme qu'il faut aller remuer le germe de l'honneur et de la gloire... présentez leur sans cesse l'image des héros, et des hommes utiles que cette idée les réveille.⁸⁶

No longer simply a variation on the theme of *memento mori*, but a 'leçon pour les états et pour l'humanité entière;' the goal of the *éloge* was to reward the virtuous and to encourage others to follow in their footsteps.⁸⁷

Having renounced the Christian past, Thomas looked instead to the classics for inspiration, to the meritocratic triumphs and statues of Republican antiquity, because if the elegy's purpose was didactic, its character was, Thomas proudly declared, 'conformé à l'esprit républicain.'⁸⁸ Its essence was to exalt accomplishments rather than birth, virtue rather than titles, and *bienfaisance* rather than glory. The contrast with the self-serving flattery of courtly sycophants could not have been more marked, or more constantly emphasised:

Nous avons vu les panégyristes le plus souvent au pied des trônes dans les cabinets des ministres... nous avons vu des orateurs pleurent sur les cendres viles, le crime honoré par l'éloge, l'esclave louant en esclave, et remerciant de la pesanteur de ses fers; l'intérêt dictant des mensonges à la renommée, et l'autorité croyant usurper la gloire.⁸⁹

⁸³ The winning *éloges* concerned the Maréchal de Saxe, Duguay-Trouin, D'Aguesseau, Sully and Descartes.

⁸⁴ While Grimm considered the *Essai* to be 'rempli de finesse et de gout', opinion was, however, divided, and Stéphanie de Genlis' criticism of Thomas' over-emphatic style was widely shared. *Corr. Litt.* April 1773, pp. 231-34, and Genlis, *Mémoires Inédits*, vol. iii, pp. 319 and vol. vi, p. 165.

⁸⁵ Thomas, *Essai sur les éloges*, p. 250.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

⁸⁷ Thomas, 'Éloge de Sully', in Thomas, *Œuvres*, vol. iii, p. 234.

⁸⁸ Citing the Greek respect for the name of Solon and Lycurgus, and the Roman celebration of Cato, Thomas applauded the antique custom of raising 'des arcs de triomphe aux magistrats comme aux guerriers' *Eloge de Henri-François D'Aguesseau, Chancelier de France, Secours qui a remporté le prix de l'Académie Française*, in Thomas, *Oeuvres*, (Amsterdam, 1774 ed.) vol. iii, p. 70, and Thomas, *Essai sur les Éloges*, p. 135.

⁸⁹ Thomas, *Essai sur les Éloges*, p. 225.

The clerical platitudes that exalted the lineage of the nobleman or the conquests of the military commander were banished to the obscurantist past, in favour of a more seemly species of fame, one more in tune with Marmontel's vision of glory as that which 'a pour objet l'utile, l'honnête, et le juste'.⁹⁰ For too long these qualities had been scorned, for too long the man of letters had been a prophet crying in the wilderness, scorned by his contemporaries, and persecuted by the powers that be. Posing as the avenging angel of history, Thomas demanded vengeance for the sufferings of the savant and vowed to avenge:

des persécutions, et de la haine, et des tourments de l'envie, et des noirceurs de la calomnie et de tout ce qui a été et sera éternellement le partage de l'homme qui aura le malheur de s'élever au-dessus de son siècle.⁹¹

Such rhetoric represented a radical challenge to the established social hierarchy, and particularly to the Church that had orchestrated this cascade of calumny, but Thomas did more than simply denounce the abuses of the past in the name of an all-seeing posterity. In true *encyclopédiste* fashion, his fundamental concern was to revolutionise the relationship between the *philosophes* and political authority. In Thomas' hands, the *éloge* promised to grant the intellectual a respectable, and rewarding, rôle in society, and thereby realise Marmontel's aspiration that men of letters should be recognised as the true 'arbitres de la gloire et par conséquence les plus utiles des hommes'.⁹²

By the time of his death in 1785, Thomas' self-proclaimed revolution in rhetoric seemed to have swept all before it. Theoretically, both his *Essai* and his prize-winning *éloges* offered a coherent and radical vision of the man of letters as an *engagé* intellectual striving, and suffering, for the benefit of society as a whole. As such, the *éloge* represented the ideal of the *philosophe* in all its pristine purity, glorifying him as a moral legislator, and heralding him as a stigmatised saviour of mankind whose rightful place was alongside the throne. As Thomas explained in 1767: 'la gloire de l'homme qui écrit, messieurs, est donc de préparer des matériaux

⁹⁰ Grimm, for example, poured scorn on the 'lieux communs et des platitudes' contained in Le Franc de Pompignan's elegy of the Duc de Bourgogne. *Corr. Litt.* vol. iv, November 1761, p. 478. Marmontel, 'Gloire', *Encyclopédie*, vol. vii, p. 718.

⁹¹ Thomas, 'Éloge de Descartes', p. 509.

⁹² Marmontel, 'Gloire', *Encyclopédie*, vol. vii, p. 717.

utiles à l'homme qui gouverne.⁹³ Such was the theory of the *éloge*; but as Hufton suggests, 'we should as historians, be conscious of the demarcation between theory and what actually happened', and what actually happened proved to be quite different from the sanguine expectations of a Thomas or a d'Alembert.⁹⁴ In order to examine this gap between the theory and practice of enlightened remembrance, we must look to the social and political context in which the *éloge* emerged as the principal discourse of enlightened remembrance.

The rise of the *éloge* coincided with the outbreak of 'une guerre violente et opiniâtre' in the previously sleepy world of the *Académie Française*.⁹⁵ Disillusioned with the increasingly fractious atmosphere of the salons, and embittered by the traumas of editing the *Encyclopédie*, especially after the furore provoked by his article 'Genève' in 1757, d'Alembert began to look for a more secure 'institutional locus' for the Enlightenment.⁹⁶ Having barely scraped into the ranks of the *immortels* in 1754, the *Académie Française* was not, at first glance, an ideal choice, but the *Académie* did offer d'Alembert something of the prestige he craved and the sanctuary that had been conspicuously absent in the *Encyclopédie*. With Voltaire's blessing, he launched an offensive to win partisans for 'la bonne cause' in 'le pays ennemi,' and embarked on the colonisation of the *Académie* in the name of the *parti philosophique*.⁹⁷ Despite numerous obstacles, d'Alembert's campaign proved remarkably successful in building upon the foundations laid by Duclos as secretary of the Academy. In one election after another, his protégés were levered into the plum positions of the Parisian Academies, and by the late 1770's, the benches of the *Académie Française* were lined with the likes of Marmontel, Thomas, Suard, and La Harpe, all impeccably accredited partisans of enlightenment.⁹⁸ Certainly, d'Alembert's coup had not been bloodless. Conservatives such as Le Franc de Pompignan fought the godless machinations of *la philosophie* to the last man, but while they succeeded in delaying

⁹³ Marmontel, 'Discours prononcé à l'Académie Française, le 22 janvier 1767', in Marmontel, *Œuvres*, vol. ii, pp. 1-13, p. 4.

⁹⁴ O. Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship in the French Revolution*, (Toronto, 1992) p. xviii.

⁹⁵ *Corr. Litt.* July 1772, vol. x, p. 16.

⁹⁶ On d'Alembert's change of heart and resignation from the *Encyclopédie*, see R. Grimsely, *Jean d'Alembert, 1717-1783*, (Oxford, 1963) pp. 63-77, and K. M. Baker, *Condorcet, from Natural Philosophy to Social Mathematics*, (Chicago, 1975), p. 22.

⁹⁷ D'Alembert to Voltaire, 8th of December, 1763, in Voltaire, *Correspondence and related documents*, T. Besterman, ed. (Oxford, 1973) vol. XXVII, D11541, p. 88.

⁹⁸ On the conquest of the *Académie Française*, see D. Mornet, *Les Origines Intellectuelles de la Révolution Française*, (Paris, 1933) pp. 123 ff.

Marmontel's election until 1763, the floodgates opened soon after, and by 1770, Thomas, Condillac and Saint-Lambert were all safely installed among the elect. By 1782, the war was over, the conquest complete, and Condorcet's narrow victory over Bailly in the election to be secretary of the *Académie des Sciences* set the seal on the philosophes' success. Having fought a long, but ultimately victorious, campaign, the philosophes could now indulge in the luxury of competing amongst themselves for the spoils of the intellectual establishment. Unfortunately, however, having seen off the *parti dévot's* rear-guard action, d'Alembert also had to contend with the open hostility of more radical souls. The philosophes had long belittled the Academic Babel when they had been on the outside looking in, but even the *encyclopédistes'* attacks on 'l'hypocrisie, la cupidité, la vanité, la jalousie, la cabale' of the Academies was as nothing compared with the abuse that Mercier and other Grub street pamphleteers began to heap on the Academies' new incumbents in the 1770s and '80s.⁹⁹

It was in this context that the *éloge* emerged as the dominant discourse of enlightened memory. In the hands of d'Alembert and Thomas, the traditional elegy was re-invented as a weapon in a war fought on two fronts. For the benefit of the *parti dévot* and the titled nonentities who still polluted the *Académie's* benches, the elegy would dictate the norms of academic behaviour by promoting a new ethic of social utility. As d'Alembert insisted: 'pour mériter un *éloge*, il ne suffit pas d'avoir fait inscrire son nom dans une liste... les titres seuls ne peuvent honorer un corps où l'on compte les Leibnitz et les Newton.'¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, the rejuvenated genre also directed a stinging rebuke to the 'Rousseaus des ruisseaux' like Marat or Brissot who dared impugn the motives of this new philosophic elite, by establishing once and for all 'le titre et le métier de savant'.¹⁰¹ Thus, the seventy or so *éloges* that d'Alembert pronounced during his tenure as *secrétaire-perpétuel* of the *Académie* were destined to build a 'monument précieux...(ou les hommes) peuvent trouver des leçons utiles de philosophie'.¹⁰² There was, inevitably, a degree of rhetorical overcompensation inherent in such committed oratory, but as things settled down, the gospel according to d'Alembert and Thomas quickly became the new orthodoxy. However, this

⁹⁹ For de Jaucourt, see 'Sciences', *Encyclopédie*, vol. xiv, p. 789, for Mercier, see *L'an 2440*, p. 285, and on the gutter press, see R. Darnton, 'The High Enlightenment and the Low Life of Literature' in Darnton, *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime*, pp. 11-14.

¹⁰⁰ D'Alembert, 'Réflexions sur les Éloges Académiques', in d'Alembert, *O.C.* vol. iv, p.238.

¹⁰¹ D'Alembert to Lagrange, cited in Baker, *Condorcet*, p.10.

¹⁰² Condorcet, 'Éloge de d'Alembert', in d'Alembert, *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. i, p. xxiv.

general dissemination of *les lumières* was not entirely unproblematic. The *éloges* of Thomas, d'Alembert or Condorcet might have seemed to fix the dominant narrative of commemoration in academic circles, but it did not take long for a profound breach to open up between the theory and practice of enlightened remembrance.

The fundamental problem was the *Académie* itself. As Darnton has so convincingly argued, admission into the Academy, and the allure of the pension list, tended to sap the critical spirit, but if the *philosophes'* presence in the Academy inevitably entailed some compromise with the powers that be, this was equally true of the process that had led to their election in the first place.¹⁰³ The path to the Academy was littered with failed candidacies, and a successful appointment owed as much to the astute use of political patronage as it did to merit. D'Alembert's own election in 1754 had only been achieved after tortuous lobbying by Mme du Deffrand, and even a paragon of virtue like Thomas was not beyond making a virtue out of necessity when it came to cultivating the right contacts at Court.¹⁰⁴ Invited by d'Angiviller in 1766 to pronounce an *éloge* in memory of the Dauphin, Thomas overcame his scruples concerning 'les panégyristes le plus souvent au pied des trônes,' and eagerly sang the praises of the *parti dévot's* leading spokesman at court. The resulting oration pleased no one, least of all Diderot, who launched forth:

Jamais l'art de la parole n'a été si indignement prostitué. Vous avez pris tous les grands hommes passés, présents et à venir, et vous les avez humiliés devant un enfant qui n'a rien dit ni rien fait... On saura, monsieur, ce qui vous a déterminé à parler, et l'on ne vous pardonnera pas la petitesse de votre motif. Vous déshonorerez vous-même... Si j'avais comme vous cette voix qui sait évoquer les mânes, j'évoquerais celles de d'Aguesscau, de Sully, de Descartes, vous entendriez leurs reproches et vous ne les soutiendriez pas.¹⁰⁵

Paradoxically, Diderot immediately followed this rebuke with a number of his own suggestions for a monument dedicated to the memory of the very same Dauphin, but his caustic jibes about the meanness of Thomas' motives still rang true, because less than a year after extolling the Dauphin, Thomas took his seat among the *immortels*. Above jockeying for position for himself, or perhaps simply aware that it was

¹⁰³ Darnton's assessment of Suard's career: 'Suard lived on sinecures and pensions, not on sales of books. In fact, he wrote little and had little to say – nothing, it need hardly be added, that would offend the regime' illustrates this point clearly. Darnton, 'The High Enlightenment and the Low Life of Literature', p. 7.

¹⁰⁴ Grimsley, *Jean D'Alembert*, p. 81.

¹⁰⁵ *Corr. Lit.*, vol. vii, (April 1766) pp. 17-18.

pointless, Diderot went on to ridicule the efforts of d'Alembert's protégés with monotonous regularity. Thomas was frequently dismissed for his over-emphatic style, while La Harpe's oratory was declared to suffer from the other extreme: 'rien ne bat au-dessous de la mamelle gauche... Il raconte, et puis quoi encore? Il raconte.'¹⁰⁶ Stylistic issues were undoubtedly at stake, but underlying Diderot's persistent criticism was a realisation that success had brought with it a marked lack of fervour, an absence of the old belligerence. As the 'pays ennemi' gradually fell to the *parti philosophique*, so the imperatives governing the language of enlightened commemoration had steadily altered. As the annual Saint-Louis' day oration in the Louvre became a social spectacle, attracting the cream of Parisian high society, d'Alembert and his colleagues were increasingly forced to strike a balance between what was desirable for the *philosophes* to say and what was acceptable to their blue-blooded audience.¹⁰⁷ Negotiating between these two vastly different priorities, the eulogist's task was a delicate one, and as a result, the *éloge* had lost its edge.

D'Alembert had always been aware that his strategy of colonising the Academies would involve sacrificing a few 'otages à la décence', and the fact that he was compelled to eulogise every passing member, no matter how insignificant, was one of them.¹⁰⁸ For all his efforts to modernize the *Académie* from within, institutional etiquette still imposed certain conventions on the *philosophes*, and despite d'Alembert's best intentions, the reception speeches and eulogies of the 1770s and '80s continued to sound much as Voltaire had described them in 1760:

composé de quatre ou cinq propositions essentielles. La première, que le cardinal de Richelieu était un grand homme; ... en second lieu, le chancelier Séguier d'être de son côté un grand homme, sans compté troisement que Louis XIV avait été aussi un grand home; mais que quatrement l'académicien auquel on succède avait été surtout un très grand homme, ainsi que le directeur, le secrétaire et même tous les membres de l'Académie.¹⁰⁹

Of course, there were ways around this problem, and d'Alembert's eulogies of academic nonentities such as Chamillart and Houtteville damned their subjects with

¹⁰⁶ *Corr. Litt.*, vol. ix, (November 1771) pp. 384-5.

¹⁰⁷ See, for example, *Corr. Litt.*, February 1767, vol. vii. p. 214, and February 1773, vol. x, pp. 197-8.

¹⁰⁸ Cited in Roche, 'Académies et Politique au Siècle des Lumières', p. 340.

¹⁰⁹ Reported in *Corr. Litt.* mai 1760, vol. iv, pp.235-6 Even Thomas bowed to propriety in this matter, and his reception speech followed exactly the same pattern of lauding Richlieu and Séguier as Voltaire had mocked so many years before. Thomas, 'Discours prononcé à l'Académie Française, le 22 janvier 1767', in Thomas, *Oeuvres*, vol. ii, pp. 1-13, p. 11-12.

faint praise.¹¹⁰ However, as Goodman has demonstrated, a number of *affaires* in the early 1770s also laid down clear markers as to just how far the philosophic camp could test the patience of the authorities, and d'Alembert and his acolytes were forced to temper their criticism of their less talented colleagues.¹¹¹ The theatrical asides and witty euphemisms that audiences had previously decoded as stark criticism consequently gave way to a more compliant approach, as exemplified by d'Alembert's memorial address for the *comte* de Clermont in 1781. The *comte* had breeding on his side, but little else, and in private, d'Alembert had always been scathing about his sterile presence on the Academy's roll of honour.¹¹² In public however, in his official capacity as secretary of the Academy, such disdain ceded to deference when, in 1781, d'Alembert welcomed the *comte's* equally undeserving nephew, Chamfort, to the Academy with a glowing reference to the neophyte's distinguished relation: 'un prince de l'illustre sang de nos rois, un prince qui a bien voulu se soumettre à l'égalité académique, qui a paru même s'en honorer.'¹¹³ Obviously, decency imposed its own decorum, but many observers found it increasingly difficult to take d'Alembert's sanctimonious claim that 'c'est par les actions qu'il faut louer ceux qui le méritent' too seriously in the light of such craven grovelling.¹¹⁴ Mercier's opinion of such efforts was predictably damning: 'l'orateur a promis quelquefois de dire la vérité, mais... la promesse est un parjure, la vérité demeure au bas de l'escalier de la chaire de vérité, et l'orateur y monte seul.'¹¹⁵ Much had been promised of the *éloge*, but evidently, little had been delivered.

It would be all too easy to dismiss Mercier's spite and Diderot's carping but for the salutary example of d'Alembert's sycophantic tribute to the utterly unremarkable *comte* de Clermont. It might also be objected that such criticisms of the academic *éloge* were already out of date by the time they appeared in the mid-1780s; and David Wisner has recently argued that the political controversies of the early 1770s did

¹¹⁰ Concerning Houteville, d'Alembert caustically observed that he 'mourut plus regretté de ses confrères que du public.' 'Éloge de Houteville', in d'Alembert, *Oeuvres Complètes*, vol. iii, p. 241.

¹¹¹ The most important of these was the controversy that broke out between Thomas and the Avocat-Général, de Séguier in 1770, see Goodman, *The Republic of Letters*, pp. 230-32.

¹¹² D'Alembert to Voltaire, 18 November 1771, in Voltaire, *Correspondence and Related documents*, (Oxford, 1975) vol. xxxviii, Letter D17457, p. 144.

¹¹³ For an assessment of Chamfort's contribution to the life of the *Académie*, see Mercier's description of him as 'd'une stérilité parfaite... un grand homme académicien, comme lui, ne doit rien écrire...'. Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*, vol. ii, p. 1211.

¹¹⁴ D'Alembert, 'Réflexions sur les éloges académiques', in *Oeuvres Complètes*, vol. ii, p. 151.

¹¹⁵ Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*, p. 1448.

inject a fresh dose of messianic verve into the genre. Examining the compositions submitted to the *Académie Française*'s competition for an essay in honour of Michel de l'Hôpital in 1777, Wisner suggests that the entries submitted by Condorcet, Guibert and Garat bear witness to a 'widespread malaise and dissatisfaction with the terms of French constitutional debate.'¹¹⁶ This may well be so, but however eloquent these essays in political discontent were, the fact remains that 1777's *prix d'éloquence* went to Joseph-Honoré Rémy, a fairly mediocre writer but a particularly staunch defender of royal prerogative against the claims of *parlement* and *philosophe* alike. Rémy had made his name during the Maupeou controversy earlier in the decade with the robustly anti-parlementaire *Code des Français*, and his eulogy of the sixteenth century chancellor continued more or less where the *Code* had left off. Arguing emphatically that 'le chancelier veut que le Magistrat soit subordonné au Monarque', Rémy's essay was an uncompromisingly defence of the *thèse monarchique* in all its absolutist glory.¹¹⁷ For Rémy, and, one presumes for the *Académie* that saw fit to crown his efforts, the legislator was certainly laudable, but he remained very much the servant of the Crown, a far cry from the independent, iconic figure that would be forged in the cauldron of Revolutionary politics. After its brief flirtation with dissidence, the Academy had returned to its roots, and the resulting rhetoric looked increasingly like an exercise in self-serving bombast. In its heyday, the *éloge* had demanded recognition for the 'homme de lettres comme citoyen...citoyen généraux méditant dans son cabinet solitaire', but with the *homme de lettres* now comfortably installed in the Academy, the *éloge* no longer needed to challenge the values of the monarchy, either implicitly or explicitly.¹¹⁸ By the 1780's, the *philosophes* had become complacent, and their rites of memory reeked of self-satisfaction.

If such luminaries as Thomas and d'Alembert found it difficult to practice what they preached, it is hardly surprising that the torch burned less brightly as it passed on to less illustrious hands. But whatever criticism might be levelled against the plodding efforts of Suard or La Harpe, it was as nothing compared to the problems the *philosophes*' discourse of memory faced in the more traditional ambience of the

¹¹⁶ D. A. Wisner, *The cult of the legislator in France, 1750-1830: A study in the political theology of the French Enlightenment*, (Oxford, 1997) p. 84.

¹¹⁷ J.-H. Rémy, *Éloge de Michel de l'Hôpital, Chancelier de France. Discours qui a remporté le prix de l'Académie Française en 1777*, (Paris, 1777) B. L. 609.i.17.2, p. 35.

¹¹⁸ Thomas, 'Discours prononcé à l'Académie Française le 22 janvier 1767' in *Œuvres*, vol. ii, p. 1.

provincial academy. Dominated by the nobility of the robe, and a legal and savant haute bourgeoisie, the provincial academies were certainly imbued with an ethos of social utility and improvement; but as Roche has argued, they remained deeply conservative institutions, hierarchically structured and fiercely proud of their prerogatives. More *royaume* than *république des lettres*, the provincial academy was firmly embedded in a social order characterised, first and foremost, by privilege and exclusivity.¹¹⁹ The provincial academy therefore represented a quite different mental landscape to its counterpart in the capital, and if an occasionally confrontational approach to memory had been virtually inevitable in the hothouse of Parisian cultural politics in the 1760s, commemoration took on an altogether more benign aspect in the less fevered atmosphere of the provinces. In a world defined by polite amateurism and a cautious respect for authority, Thomas' opposition between the values of the court and the city dissolved in oft-repeated *éloges* of local bishops, nobles and princes. While metropolitan sophisticates trumpeted their status as self-made men, insisting pointedly that: 'les véritables aïeux d'un homme de génie sont les maîtres qui l'ont précédé dans la carrière, et ses vrais descendants sont des élèves dignes de lui', their provincial brethren persisted in a stubborn recognition of the more conventional virtues of the bloodline.¹²⁰ Similarly, death in the Parisian *éloge* was largely a scientific affair, a matter of autopsies and cold, hard facts, the provincials adhered to a much more traditional ideal, stressing the merits of the conventional *mort chrétienne* in the face of the more secularised metropolitan model.¹²¹ Given the prominence of noblemen and clerics in the provincial academies, such a difference in emphasis is hardly surprising, but it was nevertheless galling, and d'Alembert's tetchy reminder that 'les réflexions philosophiques sont l'âme et la substance de ce genre d'écrits' was doubtless written with such digressions in mind.¹²²

Beyond the metropolis, the *philosophes'* carefully constructed theory of remembrance was prone to unravel with alarming ease. Admittedly, the rustics paid homage to the appropriate idols; but all too often, they did so for the wrong reasons. Local honour was frequently at stake, and one suspects that the annual *Éloge de Montesquieu*

¹¹⁹ Roche, *Le Siècle des Lumières en Province*, vol. i, p.385.

¹²⁰ Condorcet, 'Éloge de d'Alembert par Condorcet', p.i. For the continuing prevalence of this theme in provincial eulogies, see Roche, *Le Siècle des Lumières en Province*, vol. ii, tables 5 and 6, p. 209.

¹²¹ Half of provincial elegies chose this frame of reference, in comparison to less than a third of Parisian *éloges*, Roche, *ibid.*, p. 211.

¹²² D'Alembert, 'Réflexions sur les Éloges', *O. C.* vol. ii, p. 152

sponsored by the noblemen who adorned Bordeaux's 'somnolent' academy owed more to *parlementaire* pride in a native son than it did to any more enlightened agenda.¹²³ More tellingly, the academy of Châlons-sur-Marne saw no contradiction in honouring Voltaire in one essay competition in 1779, having recently offered a prize for another devoted to 'le triomphe de la foi'.¹²⁴ If such extreme indifference to the tempo of events in the capital was rare, it nonetheless illustrates the divergence between the priorities of the Parisian elite and those of the regional academies. Nowhere was this divergence more clear than in the nature of the members eulogised. Lacking, as a rule, the galaxy of luminaries that adorned the Parisian scene, the provincials were content to celebrate a much less auspicious array of local worthies. For de Ratte, the secretary of the *Académie de Montpellier*, the contributions of all academicians to knowledge, no matter how modest, deserved recognition:

En s'obligeant à faire l'éloge de tous leurs membres les académies ont voulu que le savant modeste pût y trouver sa récompense, et que le mérite ignoré cessât de l'être. Les hommes illustres qui ont assez vécu pour établir solidement leur gloire ne sont pas ceux à qui elles rendent avec plus d'empressement cette sorte de tributs.¹²⁵

Seen from a Parisian perspective, this tendency to dole out 'une petite apothéose, à la vérité aussi obscure que leur vie (à) les plus minces littérateurs' was lamentable to say the very least.¹²⁶ However, from the point of view of the provincial academies, it was indispensable in fostering and maintaining a sense of corporate identity, an identity that was ill at ease with the epic individualism that characterised the Parisian *éloge*. Although sharing a common vocabulary, and deploying many of the same stylistic conventions, the quite distinct social contexts of these two worlds, their contrasting aims and aspirations, and their very different publics had introduced a marked dissonance into the rhetoric of enlightened remembrance. What was, in effect, a sort of academic federalism *avant la lettre* had, in effect, undermined the values of the Parisian eulogists in the interests of the provincial status quo.

Typical of these centrifugal forces was the pre-revolutionary career of Bertrand Barère, whose various literary forays in the 1780s were the basis of his irresistible rise

¹²³ For Bordeaux' academic milieu, see W. Doyle, *The Parlement of Bordeaux at the end of the Old Regime: 1771-90*, (London, 1974) p. 132.

¹²⁴ Roche, 'La Diffusion des Lumières' p. 914.

¹²⁵ cited in Roche, *La France des Lumières*, pp. 485-6.

¹²⁶ D'Alembert, 'Réflexions sur les Éloges', p. 150.

in southern society.¹²⁷ Over a seven year period beginning in 1782 Barère won admission to the *Académie de Montauban*, the prestigious *Académie des Jeux Floraux* and the Grand Orient lodge of Toulouse on the strength of a succession of *éloges* submitted to competitions all over the Midi. Barère was clearly a gifted orator, and knew well how to employ the necessary rhetorical flourishes to best effect. His *éloge* of the reformist Toulousain advocate, Furgole, set just the right philosophic tone in its valediction of the legislator: 'ces hommes dont la vie n'est qu'un sacrifice perpétuel au bien public, ces savans qui servent la société par des travaux utiles, en éclairant le chaos de la législation.'¹²⁸ However, as subsequent events would prove only too well, Barère could turn his rhetorical skills to any cause. While his repertoire included essays in honour of Montesquieu for the *Académie de Bordeaux* and Rousseau for the *Jeux Floraux* in 1787, Barère's enlightened credentials begin to look rather hollow in the light of his *éloge* of the notorious anti-*philosophe* Le Franc de Pompignan for the *Académie de Montauban* in the very same year. Extolling Le Franc's devotion to the one true faith may have gone down well with the prelates and peers who dominated Montauban's academic milieu, but as Gershoy notes, the entire essay was 'a piece of shameless trimming.'¹²⁹ Such rhetorical opportunism was hardly what the Parisians theorists of the *éloge* had in mind when they urged their provincial partners to follow their lead, but Barère's oratorical promiscuity suggests the potential for de-radicalisation that was inherent in the widespread diffusion of the *éloge*.

Barère's success with the genre was exceptional, but his willingness to deploy it in the service of an unrelenting project of self-promotion was not, for there were countless budding Barères hammering at the doors of every learned society in France.¹³⁰ While a few future Revolutionaries, Garat for example, actually managed to escape the anonymity of provincial life on the strength of their elegiac talents, most, like Marat and Robespierre, did not. However, the very thought of the Incorruptible pandering to the *Académie d'Amiens'* sense of self-importance by acclaiming the profoundly

¹²⁷ The following discussion of Barère's early literary endeavours is drawn largely from L. Gershoy, *Bertrand Barère: A Reluctant Terrorist*, (Princeton, 1962) and J.- P. Thomas, *Bertrand Barère: la voix de la Révolution*, (Paris, 1989)

¹²⁸ Barère, *Éloge de Jean-Baptiste Furgeole, avocat au Parlement de Toulouse*, (Toulouse, 1783) p. 5.

¹²⁹ The first two orders accounted for 85% of the *Académie de Montauban's* membership. Roche, *Le siècle des lumières en province*, vol. ii, p. 216. Gershoy, *Bertrand Barère*, pp. 35-6.

¹³⁰ As Mercier sarcastically suggested, the writer's motives were frequently ambivalent: 'tandis qu'il plaide la cause de l'humanité dans son cabinet solitaire, et qu'il songe à remporter le prix de Berne.' *Tableau de Paris*, vol. i, p. 709.

insignificant comic poet, Jean-Baptiste Gresset, as 'un phénomène littéraire' is as good a guide as any to the dismal state of the *éloge* on the eve of the Revolution.¹³¹ By the late 1780s, too many provincial nonentities had been acclaimed in these terms for the *éloge* to retain any credibility with the radical cognoscenti, and Laclos was left to lament the consequences of 'ce vain bruit d'éloges données sans examen, et répété au hazard.'¹³² Triumphant in the Paris academies, and a path to glory in the provinces, the *éloge* had become the social ritual par excellence of the flourishing Academic world, but this very success had proved its undoing. However much it paid lip service to the avant-garde ideal of a meritocracy based on socially useful erudition and benevolent virtue, the radical potential of the *éloge* had been steadily absorbed and neutralised by the Academic establishment. Unlike the political *libelles* or judicial *mémoires* that were composed to persuade public opinion of the need for reform, *éloges* were written in order to win academic accolades and establish literary reputations, and this self-serving rationale ultimately proved decisive.¹³³ Constrained by the institutional and social framework that was its *raison d'être*, the elegy lacked the freedom of manoeuvre necessary to offer a radical critique of the privileged world of which it was so much a part. As an obligatory rite of passage within the Academic establishment, the *éloge* could never escape this harsh reality, and it ended up merely reinforcing the privileges it aspired to undermine. After sixty years, Montesquieu's merciless portrait of the Academic Babel still seemed all too depressingly true. For Mercier, the result was little short of a travesty:

M. d'Alembert est heureux le jour de la Saint-Louis... Il lit ensuit un éloge parfois malin, où il a semé de petites vérités modestes, avec une prudence, un sel, un enjouement qui divertissent l'assemblée. Il ne dit presque rien, mais on voit ce qu'il voudrait dire: on l'entend dans ses petites allusions, et l'on bat des mains. Tout cela ne signifiera absolument rien dans vingt ans... M. d'Alembert est le courtisan de la vérité; il l'aime, il lui fait des mines, quelquefois des grimaces, mais le mauvais goût académique est cause qu'il lui tient un langage toujours trop apprêté.¹³⁴

The rules of the game had changed; the 'otages à la décence' that d'Alembert had feared had exacted a heavy price.

¹³¹ Robespierre, 'Éloge de Gresset', in M. Bouloiseau et al, eds., *Oeuvres de Maximilien Robespierre*, 10 vols. (Paris, 1957-67) vol. i, pp. 119-47, p. 119.

¹³² 'Lettre à Messieurs de l'Académie Française sur l'éloge de M. le Maréchal de Vauban proposé pour sujet du prix d'éloquence de l'année 1787.' Laclos, *Oeuvres Complètes*, (Paris, 1962 ed.) p. 546.

¹³³ On judicial *mémoires*, see S. Maza, *Private Lives and Public affairs: the causes célèbres of pre-Revolutionary France*, (Berkeley, 1993) and for the Grub Street pamphleteers, see R. Darnton, *The Literary Underground*, pp. 1-41.

¹³⁴ L.-S. Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*, (Paris, 1994 ed.) vol. ii, p. 262.

Mercier was rarely more scathing than this. Doubtless, a degree of animosity towards the Academies' mandarins inspired these bitter words, but it would be unjust to discount this outburst as typical Grub Street rancour. Mercier was, after all, a remarkably successful writer in his own right, author of one of the century's forbidden bestsellers, *L'An 2440*, and it is to this work that we must turn in order to explain the sheer venom of his attack on d'Alembert.¹³⁵ Mercier's bitter conviction that d'Alembert had prostituted the eulogy of great men for a few *jetons* sprang, not from spite, but from the supreme importance he attached to the ideal of the *grand homme* as an inspirational figure, an indispensable guide in the ways of virtue. This idea, this overwhelming confidence in the moral conductivity of the *exemplum virtutis* is one of the dominant themes of Mercier's futuristic fantasy *L'An 2440: rêve s'il en fût jamais*. The novel's premise was disarmingly simple; the narrator wakes after a sleep of centuries to find his homeland transformed. Under the aegis of a benevolent philosopher-king, France has become an enlightened utopia, a land of political consensus and benign deism where reason and tolerance are the order of the day.¹³⁶ The twenty-fifth century French are equally unrecognisable. After a peaceful revolution, they have finally become decent human beings and conscientious citizens, right-thinking men and women shorn of the vices of the old order. Their capital city is just as transformed. No longer littered with the architectural vestiges of despotism, the city's streets are now lined with statues of 'des hommes vertueux' such as Montesquieu, Buffon, Voltaire, and Rousseau, a silent but compelling tribute to their contribution to the emancipation of mankind, and an eloquent lesson in patriotic devotion to the public good.¹³⁷ Paris has become an immense 'livre de morale', a vast exercise in well-meaning propaganda designed to inspire the populace with a burning love of country and an ardent interest in virtue.¹³⁸ At its centre, the Pont-Neuf, now

¹³⁵ *L'An 2440: rêve s'il en fût jamais* went through twenty-five editions in the years preceding the Revolution, and tops Darnton's list of forbidden bestsellers, see R. Darnton, *The Forbidden Bestsellers of pre-Revolutionary France*, (London, 1996) pp. 63 and 115.

¹³⁶ This idealised government was, Mercier rather vaguely explained, 'ni monarchique, ni démocratique, ni aristocratique' but 'raisonnable et fait pour les hommes.' L.-S. Mercier, *L'An 2440: rêve s'il en fût jamais*, (s. l., 1786), 3 vols., vol. i, p. 98

¹³⁷ 'Que cette file de héros dont le front muet, mais imposant crie à tous qu'il est utile et grand d'obtenir l'estime publique.' Mercier, *L'An 2440*, vol. i. p. 76.

¹³⁸ *L'An 2440*, vol. i, p. 44.

renamed the Pont Henri IV, serves the same moralising purpose. Here, a statue of 'le bon Henri IV' is flanked by the busts of those who had served the nation well: 'des grands hommes qui, comme lui, ont aimés les hommes et qui n'ont voulu que le bien de la société.'¹³⁹ The annual Salon is equally revolutionised. Having turned their backs on the venal toadying and sensual depravities that disfigured so many eighteenth century Salons, the artists of the year 2440 had rediscovered their true vocation and engaged in 'une admirable conspiration en faveur de l'humanité'.¹⁴⁰ Everywhere Mercier's narrator turns, he sees nothing but 'des sujets propres à inspirer des sentiments de grandeur et de vertu'.¹⁴¹ Even the homes of the ordinary citizens are not immune to this relentless didacticism, and engravings of assorted 'sujets intéressants qui présentent les exemples du vertu et d'héroïsme' decorate their walls.¹⁴² In Mercier's utopia, the moral revolution that the *éloge* had once seemed to promise was stamped on the very fabric of the city.

In 1771, when it first appeared, Mercier's vision of a regenerated France crystallised, in its own imaginative way, much of the Enlightenment's critique of contemporary French *mœurs*, and popularised its agenda for reform. Few aspects of this novel are more representative of this agenda than Mercier's ideas on the moral regeneration of the arts. As Locquin, Leith and Crow have shown, the decades prior to the publication of Mercier's novel were marked by mounting disquiet concerning the decadence of the arts, and the emergence of a lively tradition of Salon criticism expressing precisely the same ambitions as Mercier articulated in his immensely successful fantasy.¹⁴³ As early as 1727, Titon de Tillet had recommended raising public statues and monuments to loyal servants of the crown, glorious commanders, and men of genius as 'le vrai moyen d'animer les hommes à travailler pour l'utilité et la gloire de l'État'.¹⁴⁴ In the 1720s, Titon's was a voice in the wilderness, and his scheme for a grandiose monument, a *Parnasse Français* honouring the literary giants of the classical age came to nothing, but by the 1770s, a host of artists, critics, and

¹³⁹ *L'An 2440*, vol. i, p. 44.

¹⁴⁰ *L'An 2440*, vol. ii, p. 62.

¹⁴¹ *L'An 2440*, vol. ii, p. 61.

¹⁴² *L'An 2440*, vol. ii, p. 82.

¹⁴³ J. Locquin, *La Peinture d'Histoire en France de 1747 à 1785*, (Paris, 1912), J. A. Leith, *The Idea of Art as Propaganda in France: 1750-1799: A Study in the History of Ideas*, (Toronto, 1965) and T. Crow, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth Century Paris*, (New Haven, 1985)

¹⁴⁴ E. Titon du Tillet, *Description du Parnasse Français, suivi d'une liste Alphabétique des Poètes et des musiciens rassemblés sur ce monument*, (Paris, 1727 ed.) pp. xii, and xxiii.

pamphleteers had come to share the fundamental premises of his argument.¹⁴⁵ From mid-century onwards, the opening of each Salon was greeted by increasingly strident demands that artists abandon their predilection for obscure mythological subjects and the frivolity of the rococo style, and join the ranks of 'les précepteurs du genre humain, les consolateurs des maux de la vie, les vengeurs du crime, les rémunérateurs de la vertu'.¹⁴⁶ The claim that the arts should be an 'école des mœurs' was heard with increasing frequency throughout the 1770s and 80s, and there were few more effective vehicles for this educational and moral crusade than the idealised image of the *grand homme*.¹⁴⁷ Of course, there was nothing particularly new in this. Both the Church and the State had long recognised the propaganda potential of the arts without any prompting from the *philosophes*, but nevertheless, enlightened opinion adopted the goal of consecrating the arts to virtue with the zeal of the convert.

The *philosophes*, however, were loath to acknowledge any debt to either throne or altar, and so they looked instead to classical Rome and modern England to furnish the proof for their conviction that the arts could be made to 'rendre la vertu aimable, le vice odieux'.¹⁴⁸ For a generation raised on the classics, the recourse to antiquity came naturally, but if the statues of Greece and Rome provided one striking illustration of the importance of commemoration, there was another example rather closer to hand, and successive generations of *philosophes* looked to Poet's Corner in Westminster abbey with a mixture of envy and despair. Reflecting on the abbey's memorials in his *Lettre Philosophiques*, Voltaire could hardly contain his enthusiasm in the 1730s:

Entrez à Westminster, ce ne sont pas les tombeaux des rois qu'on y admire, ce sont les monuments que la reconnaissance de la nation a érigés aux plus grands hommes qui ont contribué à sa gloire... je suis persuadé que la seule vue de ces glorieux monuments a excité plus d'un esprit et a formé plus d'un grand homme

and the same refrain was repeated again and again over the course of the next fifty years.¹⁴⁹ As Milton, Ben Johnson, Shakespeare and Handel took their respective places in Poet's Corner, so Westminster's mausoleum became a veritable obsession for the *philosophes*, endlessly summoned up as an indictment of the perverse neglect

¹⁴⁵ On the influence of Titon's Parnasse, see J. Colton, *The Parnasse François: Titon du Tillet and the origins of the monument to genius*, (New Haven, 1979)

¹⁴⁶ Diderot, *Essais sur la Peinture*, (Paris, 1955 ed.) p. 85.

¹⁴⁷ As Falconet argued, the sculptor ought to 'perpétuer la mémoire des hommes illustres, et de donner des modèles de vertu d'autant plus efficaces que ceux.' 'Sculpture', *Encyclopédie*, vol xiv, p. 834.

¹⁴⁸ Diderot, *Essais sur la Peinture*, (Paris, 1955 ed.) p. 85.

¹⁴⁹ Voltaire, *Lettre Philosophiques*, lettre xxiii, (Paris, 1986 ed.) p. 147.

suffered by well-meaning French intellectuals. In 1766, Diderot waxed lyrical about 'la belle liste de héros que l'abbaye de Westminster a créés', and twenty years later, Mercier echoed the same theme, extolling the virtues of the 'peuple sensible' who 'dans l'abbaye de Westminster... se presse en foule, qui lit avec vénération les noms des célèbres morts.'¹⁵⁰ The abbey's hodgepodge of statues and cenotaphs exerted a powerful attraction for French anglophiles, and the gardens of remembrance that graced numerous country houses in Britain, like so many bucolic Westminster abbeys were just as influential in France. Queen Caroline's Hermitage at Richmond, with its busts of Newton, Locke, and Boyle, Pope's gardens at Twickenham, William Shenstone's tomb-infested Leasowes, and Stowe's Elysian Fields and Temple of Virtue all attracted admiring glances from French visitors.¹⁵¹ These monuments seemed to embody the meritocracy that English society appeared to represent, and that looked so attractive when compared with the rigid social hierarchy that seemed to shut its doors to French men of letters. For those who looked across the channel for the modern ideal of civil society, and for a great many who did not, the very proximity, in space and time, of these monuments was proof positive of the very tangible rewards of remembrance. It is little wonder that Voltaire was so impressed by the thought of peers of the realm bearing Newton's coffin to a place of honour in the national pantheon.¹⁵² Having twice been his majesty's guest in the Bastille, he could hardly have expected the same.

By the late 1770s, however, Voltaire's prospects of securing just such a tribute appeared to have improved dramatically, as the monarchy gradually came to adopt this enlightened aesthetic as the guiding principle of royal policy towards the arts. After a faltering start under Louis XV, beginning with Cochin's ill-fated plans for the re-decoration of the château de Choisy in 1764, royal patronage began, diffidently at first, to identify with a new iconography of virtue inspired by the more purposeful agenda of enlightened art criticism.¹⁵³ With the accession of Louis XVI, and the appointment of the *comte* d'Angiviller to the influential post of *Dirécteur des*

¹⁵⁰ Diderot, 'Le Pour et le Contre', p. 56, and Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*, vol. i, p. 1150.

¹⁵¹ See the description of Stowe in B. Seeley, *A Description of the Gardens of Lord Viscount Cobham at Stow in Buckinghamshire*, (Northampton, 1746) On Stowe's influence in France, see R. A. Edlin, *The Architecture of Death: the Transformation of the Cemetery in Eighteenth Century Paris*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1984) pp. 178-196.

¹⁵² Voltaire, *Lettre Philosophiques*, p. 147.

¹⁵³ For Cochin's plans for the château, see Locquin, *La Peinture d'Histoire en France*, p. 23.

Bâtiments Royales, royal patronage was dramatically re-orientated away from the classical themes that had dominated the commissions of the 1760s towards encouraging artists to look to their own national past for morally uplifting subject matter. As d'Angiviller explained to the Royal Academy in December 1774, the king would:

verra avec un intérêt particulier les Peintres de son Académie retracer les actions et les faits honorables à la nation. Quel plus digne emploi pour les Arts que cette espèce d'association à la législation des mœurs.¹⁵⁴

The resulting programme of royal patronage constitutes the *ancien régime's* most consistent and ambitious attempt to put enlightened theory into practice in the arts. Between 1777 and 1789, royal expenditure on the arts more than doubled, as a steady stream of commissions, embracing both painting and sculpture, was ordered for the biennial Salons, each one depicting an episode from French history specifically designed to encourage patriotic devotion to duty.¹⁵⁵ The focal point of this new breed of philosophic art was the exemplary *grand homme*, a figure defined, according to d'Angiviller, by 'l'abnégation de soymême pour travailler au bien général.'¹⁵⁶ By 1789, twenty-eight statues and thirteen paintings had been commissioned, and this spending spree had a profound impact on artistic behaviour. This massive injection of royal patronage breathed new life into a moribund history genre, and even encouraged similar schemes in towns and cities across the kingdom, as exemplified by the Comte de Faugère's plan for the regeneration of the place du Peyrou in Montpellier.¹⁵⁷

However, while the critics welcomed d'Angiviller's decision to mobilise the arts to promote virtue, there was no such consensus on the question of who to commemorate, or how to commemorate them. Inevitably, the answers to these questions depended very much on who was paying, and the *Série des Grands Hommes* was quite explicitly conceived with one aim in mind: to bolster the monarchy's moral authority by taking on board some, but only some, of the aspirations of enlightened opinion. The selection of subjects for d'Angiviller's *Grands Hommes* was accordingly, a

¹⁵⁴ D'Angiviller cited in Leith, *Art as Propaganda*, pp.77-8.

¹⁵⁵ For a list of the works commissioned, see J. Leith, 'Nationalism and the fine Arts', *S. V. E. C.* vol. 89 (1972) pp. 935-7.

¹⁵⁶ Cited in G. Gramaccini, 'L'image de l'Homme Nouveau: Exemples de la Sculpture Publique à la fin de l'Ancien Régime et à l'époque Révolutionnaire', in C. Mazauric (ed.) *La Révolution Française et les processus de Socialisation de l'Homme Moderne* (Paris, 1985) pp. 675-89, p. 675.

¹⁵⁷ On the Comte de Faugère's plan, see Leith, *Space and Revolution*, pp. 11-27.

conservative one, and while d'Angiviller made some concessions to the *philosophes'* idealised man of letters, the common denominator of the entire series was, in fact, loyal service to the king. The vast majority of subjects were drawn from the 17th century, and are steeped in a wistful reverence for the recent past. Idealising Louis Quatorzian France as a golden age of aristocratic virtue and political strength in an age of increasing discord, d'Angiviller's *Grands Hommes* positively yearned for the certainties of the *Grand Siècle*. However, d'Angiviller's authoritarian priorities are clear not simply from his choice of subjects, but also from the manner in which they were portrayed. Clodion's 1779 statue of Montesquieu was one of the few commissions that looked to the 18th century for inspiration, but it was also caught in an artistic limbo between a nostalgic regard for the 17th century ideal of the *honnête homme*, with its obvious aristocratic implications, and the more recent vocabulary of enlightened virtue. Clodion's decision to downplay the author in Montesquieu in favour of the magistrate was perhaps inevitable, but this inevitability did not stop radical critics from bewailing the monarchy's enlistment of favoured sons such as Montesquieu and Fénelon as travesties of their legacy as founding fathers of the enlightenment.¹⁵⁸ Dismissed by Crow as a doomed 'iconography of excuses' the monarchy's attempts to re-invent itself symbolically by enrolling the image of the *Grand Homme* to its cause were neither particularly convincing, nor particularly well received, and by the 1780s, the artistic community returned to the classics for inspiration in a mood of disenchantment and distain.¹⁵⁹

The lesson to be drawn from the evolution of the academic *éloge* and the commissioning of d'Angiviller's *Grands Hommes* is that the commemoration of the dead could serve many masters in eighteenth century France. If any ideology was embedded in the enlightened rhetoric of remembrance, it was just as likely to be appropriated by the monarchy as it was to serve the Republic of Letters. Of course, the choice of who and how to commemorate differed according to who was paying. However, while the Republic of Letters opted for the uncompromising, and extremely unpopular, realism of Pigalle's *Voltaire Nu* and the monarchy chose to glorify a

¹⁵⁸ Lecomte's statue of Fénelon for the 1777 Salon was condemned in the *Lettres Pittoresques* for choosing to represent 'le Prélat à la mode...le Fénelon de Cour' rather than the wronged author of *Télémaque*. More pointedly, the portrayal of Montesquieu bedecked in the full splendour of his magistrate's robes by Clodion was adjudged a betrayal of his standing as a *philosophes*, see Gramaccini, 'L'Image du Homme Nouveau', pp. 677-8.

¹⁵⁹ Crow, *Painters and the Public Life*, pp. 158 and 162.

berobed Montesquieu or 'le Fénélon de Cour,' the contrast is less marked than it might initially appear.¹⁶⁰ Of the eighty subscribers to Pigalle's controversial statue, twenty-five were holders of royal office, and the same interaction of social, political, and intellectual elites marked the conception of d'Angiviller's *Grands Hommes*.¹⁶¹ The *Directeur des Bâtiments* may have been 'an intransigent royalist,' but he was also perfectly at home in *le monde éclairé*.¹⁶² A close associate of Turgot, d'Angiviller ranked alongside Thomas and Marmontel among the leading habitués of Mme de Marchais' salon, and the subjects chosen for the *Série* bear witness to the cross-fertilisation of ideas that emerged within this increasingly close-knit community.¹⁶³ In the cosy familiarity of the Salon, a new breed of tame intellectuals now furnished the monarchy with an extensive repertoire of ideas and images with which to refresh an increasingly lacklustre public image. By the 1780s, the discursive opposition between the monarchy and the republic of letters had all but dissolved as royal officials and domesticated *philosophes* rubbed shoulders under the watchful eye of the *salonnière*. For the Academic social climbers and aspiring placemen of the Salon, modernising the meaning of memory had become, as often than not, a self-serving device designed to substitute a more amenable definition of *les grands* for the prevailing model. Monumental statuary and academic *éloges* might pay lip service to the ideals of a more equitable society defined by talent rather than birth, but the radicalism of enlightened remembrance had its limits. Far from threatening the established order with a subversive proto-republicanism, the *philosophes* paraded their vision of enlightened commemoration as the most effective weapon in the monarchy's cultural arsenal: 'en rendant le peuple éclairé, il rend l'autorité plus sûre.'¹⁶⁴

For the vast majority of French men and women, the rhetorical posturing of this enlightened elite was a matter of supreme indifference, except of course, when it touched on bread and butter issues. However, if most Frenchmen were largely

¹⁶⁰ Cited in Gramaccini, 'L'image de l'Homme Nouveau', p. 677.

¹⁶¹ D. Goodman, 'Pigalle's *Voltaire nu*: The Republic of Letters represents itself to the World,' *Representations*, 16 (1986) pp. 86 - 109, p. 88.

¹⁶² R. Herbert, *David, Voltaire, Brutus and the French Revolution: An Essay in Art and Politics*, (London, 1972) p. 56.

¹⁶³ A. McClellan, 'D'Angiviller's "Great Men" of France and the Politics of the Parlements', *Art History*, vol. xiii, (1990) pp. 175-192, p. 179.

¹⁶⁴ Thomas, 'Discours prononcé à l'Académie Française, le 22 janvier 1767', in *Oeuvres*, vol. ii, p. 4.

indifferent to the politics of the *éloge* or the aesthetics of the statue, the *philosophes* were positively scornful of their compatriots, and the combination of fear and contempt that generally characterised enlightened attitudes to the common people was just as evident in their approach to remembrance as it was in most other matters. In a moment of uncharacteristic savagery, Diderot bluntly admitted that, beyond the philosophic elect, 'les autres périssent comme la brute.'¹⁶⁵ D'Holbach was, admittedly, a little less callous than this. Although sharing the fundamental premise of Diderot's argument, he granted 'l'homme du commun' a limited class of immortality in the memory of his children, but in the *Système de la Nature*, remembrance remained the preserve of the great.¹⁶⁶ It was not an appealing prospect. As the Assembly of the Clergy warned in 1775:

La réputation qui doit subsister dans les fastes de l'Histoire est interdite à la plupart des hommes; ils n'y prétendent pas; et cependant ils ont tous d'importantes obligations à remplir: preuves certains que l'espérance de cette réputation... ne peut être, pour la multitude, un motif véritable, ni pour qui que ce soit, un principal motif de vertu.¹⁶⁷

The inevitable flip side of Diderot's obsession with 'la postérité sainte et sacrée' was to condemn the vast majority of his fellow countrymen to an amnesiac abyss. It is a point worth emphasising because while Pigalle's *Voltaire nu* might constitute, as Dena Goodman argues, 'a representation of a new, egalitarian, highly political Republic of Letters', this egalitarianism had very clearly defined limits. It certainly never extended to *le peuple*, nor was it ever intended to, and it would take an altogether different type of Republic to make the celebration of the *homme commun* a possibility.¹⁶⁸ A work such as Léopold Boilly's majestic portrait of the *sans-culotte* Chenard of 1793 was quite simply unthinkable in the France of *les lumières*.¹⁶⁹ The enlightened discourse of memory had little to offer the unenlightened majority except new wonders to marvel at, and a new elite to obey. Whether it was an Elysium or a Parnassus that was on offer, the 'démocratie imaginaire' of the republic of letters was a sham: sentimental window-dressing to mask the claims of a new moral order.

¹⁶⁵ Diderot, 'Le Pour et le Contre', p. 11.

¹⁶⁶ D'Holbach, *Système de la Nature*, p. 315.

¹⁶⁷ Cited in Favre, *La Mort au Siècle des Lumières*, p. 534.

¹⁶⁸ Goodman, 'Pigalle's *Voltaire nu*', p. 97.

¹⁶⁹ Léopold Boilly, *Le chanteur Chenard porte drapeau à la fête civique de la liberté de la Savoie, 14 octobre 1792, en costume de sans-culotte*, Musée Carnavalet, Paris.

On the eve of the Revolution, the cult of great men was no longer the preserve of a literary and philosophic avant-garde. For many educated Frenchmen, it had become an intellectual commonplace, a recurring theme in polite letters and a familiar trope in popular fiction, and yet Daniel Mornet's caveat comes to mind, 'les origines de la Révolution sont une histoire; l'histoire de la Révolution en est un autre.'¹⁷⁰ The legacy of remembrance that the Revolutionary generation inherited was a rich one, but it was also extremely diverse. Any number of aesthetic alternatives confronted the men of 1789 when they came to commemorate their dead. The available choices spanned the entire spectrum from Girardin's pastoral memorials to Boullée's disembodied *architecture des ombres* and ranged from Thomas' stirring *éloges* to the sentimental elegies inspired by Young, but this sheer profusion of ideas and images offered little practical guide to the dilemmas that Revolutionary remembrance would confront. In the event, the majority of Frenchmen and women spurned most of these enlightened options. Ungraciously, they did not turn to the self-appointed 'législateurs de la société' in 1789.¹⁷¹ Indeed, as Roland Mortier has observed: 'aucun élève des "philosophes", aucun ancien encyclopédiste n'a joué dans la Révolution un rôle aussi éminent que l'abbé Grégoire ou l'évêque Fauchet, que des religieux défroqués comme Fouché.'¹⁷² One might suggest Bailly or Condorcet as the exceptions that prove the rule, but Mortier's point still holds good: genuine men of letters accounted for a mere handful of the swarming mass of confused, leaderless deputies who assembled in Versailles in the spring of 1789. Certainly, some of them had indulged their literary talents with varying degrees of success, a few had entered the academies' assorted essay competitions, a small percentage belonged to academies and lodges, and a handful had established real literary reputations, but as Tackett notes, 'the overwhelming majority - and it is a fact worth noting - had no connection with these various manifestations of Enlightenment culture.'¹⁷³ A few deputies had even composed *éloges*, but they remained a tiny minority, dwarfed by the hundreds of clergymen schooled in an altogether different language of remembrance.

¹⁷⁰ D. Mornet, *Les Origines Intellectuelles de la Révolution Française*, (Paris, 1933) p. 471.

¹⁷¹ A.-L. Thomas, *Essai sur les Éloges*, p. 226.

¹⁷² R. Mortier, 'Les Héritiers des "Philosophes" devant l'Expérience Révolutionnaire', *D. H. S.*, (1974) pp. 45-57, p. 51.

¹⁷³ T. Tackett, *Becoming a Revolutionary, The Deputies of the French National Assembly and the Emergence of a Revolutionary Culture*, (Princeton, 1996) p. 53.

In 1789, the French were 'heir to several centuries of ceremonial creativity', several centuries of Catholic ritual, and a few decades of an invented tradition that looked back to an unknown antiquity or forward to an imaginary utopia.¹⁷⁴ Several centuries of masses, sermons, processions, religious festivals and funerals, rites well-tuned to the needs of remembering the past, adept at commemorating the birth and death of *le bon Dieu*, the martyrdom of the saints, and the landmarks of everyday life. Customs and attitudes were certainly changing; it would be foolhardy to pretend otherwise, but it would be equally unwise to ascribe the evolution of religious beliefs and values too widely beyond their natural social constituency.¹⁷⁵ For those whose book collections and artistic purchases never extended much beyond a few devotional works and religious prints, for those who did not know the etiquette of enlightened grief, there was, above all, the familiar liturgy of the funeral mass, with its 'blend of hope and menace, of trust in God's promises and fear of his judgement'.¹⁷⁶ Fear may well have outweighed trust, but at least the Church held out some hope, however slight, and this was more than the Republic of Letters' posterity could offer. This liturgy remained at the heart of what most French men and women understood the remembrance of the dead to mean. Hallowed by tradition, required by custom, and above all, demanded by decency, the last rites held a special place in the consciousness of even the laxest believer, for whom, even the barest essentials of a 'decent funeral' were demanded by a sense of propriety as much as by piety. Much more than a religious duty, the last rites were a social obligation, a ritual minimum that the populace was more than ready to impose upon reluctant or avaricious clerics. The mid-century controversies surrounding the refusal of *billets de confession* are an obvious example of the popular indignation that the refusal of the last rites could provoke, but such outrage was not

¹⁷⁴ R. A. Schneider, *The Ceremonial City: Toulouse Observed 1738-1780* (Princeton, 1995) p. 175.

¹⁷⁵ Concerning religion, Mercier was quite clear in distinguishing between the '*insouciance générale*' of '*tous les hommes de la capitale qui ne sont pas peuple*' and the continuing fervour of the devotions of the '*petit peuple*.' *Tableau de Paris*, vol. i, pp. 579ff.

¹⁷⁶ McManners, *Death and the Enlightenment*, p. 275. On the predominance of devotional literature in popular book collections in the 1780's, see, for example, Roche, *The People of Paris*, p. 215 and J. Solé, 'Lecture et classes populaires à Grenoble au dix-huitième siècle: le témoignage des inventaires après décès', in *Images du peuple au 18^e siècle*, (Paris, 1973) pp. 95-102. An identical preponderance was evident in the popular art market, where religious iconography constituted the vast bulk of art works in both bourgeois and artisanal households on the eve of the Revolution. J. Chatelus, 'Thèmes picturaux dans les appartements des marchands et artisans parisiens au XVIII^e siècle', *D. H. S.*, vol. vi, (1974) pp. 309-24, and C. Fairchild, 'Marketing the Counter-Reformation: Religious objects and Consumerism in Early Modern France', in J. Censer et al, ed. *Visions and Revisions of Eighteenth-Century France*, (Pennsylvania, 1997) pp. 31-52.

peculiar to the trials of the Jansenists. Clerical insensitivity concerning the honours due to the dead could still trigger violent emotions forty years later, as the *curé* of the Parisian parish of St. Jacques de la Boucherie learnt to his cost in September 1789. His refusal to grant a fitting funeral to a local labourer who had died in a building accident almost triggered a riot, which only abated when the *curé* relented and performed the burial free of charge.¹⁷⁷

The scuffles that broke out in St. Jacques de la Boucherie in the autumn of 1789 testify to the vital importance ordinary Parisians attached to ensuring that the dead were given their customary due. However, in their anxiety to uncover the origins of Revolutionary dechristianisation, and beyond that, the conflicts of the 19th century, some historians have been too eager to overlook this fact. Certainly, Vovelle and Chaunu's analyses of 18th century wills, like Madeleine Foisil's study of the closure of the cemetery of the Saints-Innocents, would seem to suggest that attitudes towards death and remembrance were certainly changing among the urban elites.¹⁷⁸ Yet, to describe these changes in terms of a steady dechristianisation of death or a wholesale 'basculement religieux', let alone a 'rupture totale avec la tradition chrétienne', seems questionable to say the very least.¹⁷⁹ The evidence to be gleaned from the evolution of testamentary practice over the course of a century is too ambiguous, and too socially restrictive, to support such far-reaching claims, while the relocation of cemeteries in the 1780s was as likely to provoke rioting in provincial cities as it was to be met by the indifference Foisil describes.¹⁸⁰ For all the changes in commemorative culture these historians have identified, and many of these changes involved the style rather than the substance of religious belief, continuity rather than

¹⁷⁷ Hardy, *Journal de mes Loisirs*, vol. viii, pp. 493-4. See the portrayal of the scene in St. Jacques de la Boucherie in anon. *Honneurs rendus à la Pauvreté en l'église de St. Jacques de la Boucherie*, B. N. Estampes, coll. Hennin, no. 10437.

¹⁷⁸ Vovelle, *Piété baroque et déchristianisation*, and P. Chaunu et al, *Le basculement religieux de Paris au XVIII^e siècle: essai d'histoire politique et religieuse*, (Paris, 1998) and M. Foisil, 'Les attitudes devant la mort au XVIII^e siècle: sépultures et suppressions de sépultures dans le cimetière parisien des Saints-Innocents', *Revue Historique*, (1979) pp. 303-30.

¹⁷⁹ Foisil, 'Les attitudes devant la mort au XVIII^e siècle', p. 321.

¹⁸⁰ Even if we accept Foisil's argument concerning Paris, the evidence from provincial cities such as Lille and Cambrai would suggest that the closure of cemeteries was much more controversial than she allows. In both cities, the authorities saw their attempts to implement the Royal decree closing the cities' cemeteries *intra-muros* in 1779 and 1786 respectively thwarted by a combination of legal wrangling, civil disobedience, and ultimately, rioting. In both cases, the municipal authorities were eventually forced to concede defeat and re-open the old cemeteries. A. Lottin, 'Les Morts chassés de la cité; «lumières et préjugés» les émeutes à Lille et à Cambrai lors du transfert des cimetières', *Revue du Nord*, vol. lx, (1978) pp. 73-117.

change was the overwhelming characteristic of 18th century attitudes towards death and remembrance. As he stood in a Parisian bookshop in March 1785, bemused, dismayed even, by the sight of 'everybody in the shop, but myself' falling to their knees as a priest bearing 'le bon dieu' to a dying parishioner passed by, John Quincy Adams certainly found more evidence of this continuity rather than any sweeping change.¹⁸¹ A rather austere man, Adams found this extravagant display of popular piety distasteful, but he left that bookshop in no doubt that the administration of the last rites was 'one of most revered ceremonies of the Romish religion.'¹⁸² By the same token, Louis-Sébastien Mercier might have found the scholarly consensus that death was being slowly dechristianised in the closing decades of the 18th century difficult to reconcile with his own reflections on the business of dying in *ancien régime* Paris. Encountering the same scene that had caused Quincy Adams such offence, he wrote:

Je rencontre le viatique: deux pauvres gens du peuple le suivent, deux autres portent le baldaquin jadis rouge. Je suis, le prêtre enfile un escalier noir et tortueux, monte dans une espèce de grenier où sont toutes les horreurs de l'indigence. C'est une vieille femme, rebut de tout ce que l'environne, qui est étendue sur une paille à demi pourrie. Dans ce grand abandon, le prêtre soulève sa tête expirante et lui dit: "Femme, tout le monde vous oublie, mais, je viens vous trouver: Je vous apporte le souverain de l'univers, votre Dieu, il vient vous visiter, une meilleure vie vous est destinée, souffrez pour Dieu qui nous éprouve et qui vous attend dans le sein de sa miséricorde..." Et qui ne sentira avec moi que la pauvre abandonnée regarde comme une faveur précieuse ces visites de la religion et qu'elles sont utiles et nécessaires à la partie infortunée du peuple, autant qu'elles sont sacrées par leur but.¹⁸³

As a means of socio-cultural classification, Mercier's terminology leaves much to be desired, but for 'la partie infortunée du peuple', surely a substantial proportion of the French population, religion was the only alternative to despair in the face of death. When all the world had forgotten them, when the *philosophes* had so casually consigned them to a merciless oblivion, there was, at least, the consolation of the Church and the promise of 'une meilleure vie.' Aristocratic *libertines* might choose to die with sophisticated nonchalance, sceptical *philosophes* met their end with a mixture of outward conformity and legal wrangling, and Rousseau's Julie set a new

¹⁸¹ John Quincy Adams, *The Diary of John Quincy Adams*, D. Grayson, ed., (Cambridge, Mass., 1981) vol. i, p. 235.

¹⁸² Noting that the priest who carried the sacrament was called the *Porte-Dieu*, he remarked that 'the word is too revolting for me to translate it. Ibid.

¹⁸³ *Tableau de Paris*, vol. ii, pp. 1120-2.

benchmark for sentimental stoicism; but, as Mercier understood only too well, such posturing was a luxury the 'partie infortunée du peuple' could ill afford.

Attitudes among the educated elite may have been changing, but for ordinary French men and women, for the men and women who would play such a prominent part in the politics of remembrance from 1789 onwards, death and remembrance remained inextricably bound up in the rituals and rhetoric of religious belief. From the last mumbled prayers for the repose of the soul to the annual devotions for the dead at Toussaint, the everyday practice of commemoration was suffused by a sense of the sacred.¹⁸⁴ Few *philosophes* cared to admit it, but Bernardin de Saint-Pierre grasped what remembrance really meant to the majority of his countrymen on the eve of the Revolution: 'il n'y a que la religion qui puisse consacrer d'une manière durable la mémoire de la vertu.'¹⁸⁵ The *Requiescat in Pace* may have given way to the *éloge* as the fashionable discourse of death, but beyond the Republic of Letters, it was difficult, if not impossible for the vast majority of Frenchmen to imagine any other means of honouring their dead. For the people who had never read Diderot or applauded Thomas or d'Alembert, nor set foot in an academy, let alone a Parisian salon, for those who could not afford the time to go and weep at Rousseau's grave; there was always the Church. And in 1789, when these people wanted to remember their dead, they turned to their priests: they had little alternative.

¹⁸⁴ For Mercier's account of the huge crowds that still descended on the great cemetery at Clamart every Toussaint to pay their respects to their dead in the 1780s, see Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*, (Amsterdam, 1782 ed.) vol. iii, p. 233.

¹⁸⁵ Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, *Études de la Nature*, p. 273.

Chapter II

Piété et Patriotisme

When the dust finally settled on the evening of July 14th, eighty-three *citoyens-soldats* lay dead in the courtyard of the Bastille. Another fifteen died soon after from their wounds.¹ Among those defending the fortress, only one *invalidé* had perished during the fighting and a few more were lynched in its aftermath, but this affront to a patriotic sense of proportion was remedied later that evening, when governor de Launay met his grisly end outside the Hôtel de Ville. After the unbearable tension of the preceding weeks, it was only natural that a relieved city should give itself up to celebration, and Paris immediately assumed a carnival aspect. Sightseers converged on the still smoking fortress, and impromptu demolition crews began the task of taking the citadel apart, stone by hated stone. Euphoric crowds lined the streets to cheer the heroic *vainqueurs* whose ranks seemed to multiply by the hour. As Jacob Elie and the grenadier Arné were carried shoulder high through the streets, acclaimed as the organisers of victory, 'couronné, environée de faisceaux,' how many spared a thought for their less fortunate comrades?² In the midst of the chaotic celebrations that followed the fighting at the Bastille, probably only the widows and orphans suddenly left alone to face the world without a breadwinner felt the impact of the day's events as a personal tragedy. For the majority of Parisians, the fall of the Bastille would henceforth be a day of jubilation, but for them, it meant the loss of a husband, a father, and the inevitable onset of poverty that this meant. Yet, soon, as

¹ For a list of the dead, see J. Durieux, *Les Vainqueurs de la Bastille*, (Paris, 1911)

² J.-S. Bailly, *Mémoires de Bailly relatifs à la Révolution Française*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1821) vol. i, p. 383.

the euphoria died down, another instinct took hold of the city: the desire to honour the memory of the dead and to give thanks for their sacrifice.

For the most part, the *vainqueurs* were men of the 'quatrième ou cinquième étage', of humble if not impoverished stock, shopkeepers, soldiers and master-craftsmen. There were a few well-heeled exceptions, the brewer Santerre and a handful of prosperous merchants, but in the main, the *vainqueurs* were the very embodiment of the Parisian *menu peuple*.³ They were men like Charles Dusson, whom we have already encountered, and Jean-Marie Gomy, one of Santerre's employees and the husbands whose deaths left behind wives, now widows, like Mmes Poirier, Bertrand, Boutillon and Begart, women without any means of supporting either themselves or their families.⁴ The dead were, in short, very ordinary men who, as one pamphleteer breathlessly reported a few days later, had 'quitter leurs boutiques, leurs ateliers, toutes leurs fonctions, pour voler au secours de la patrie'.⁵ These were unremarkable men, ordinary Parisians in every respect, men who, had they died a few days earlier, on the 8th or 12th of July for instance, would have gone to their graves unnoticed by all but a few family and friends. The extravagant *éloges* and lavish ceremonies that accompanied the rich and powerful to the grave would have been beyond them, but perhaps, if they were reasonably well-to-do, their families might have seen that a *billet d'obsèque* was printed to invite mourners to their funeral or possibly published a death notice in the local press.⁶ Alternatively, if they had been members of a corporation or confraternity, their colleagues and confreres would have seen that they received a decent funeral, donned mourning and joined their funeral cortège, just as Jacques Ménétra did for his fellow glaziers.⁷ However many of the *vainqueurs* were probably too poor for any of these measures, and they would have gone to their graves shrouded in the indifference that Mercier had described only a few years before: 'qui

³ On the social composition of the *vainqueurs*, see G. Rudé, *The Crowd in the French Revolution*, (Oxford, 1959) p. 58, J. Godechot, *The Taking of the Bastille*, (London, 1970) p. 221, and R. Monnier, *Le Faubourg Saint-Antoine: 1789-1815*, (Paris, 1981) pp.122-4.

⁴ For a list of the *vainqueurs*' widows who qualified for the National Assembly's pension scheme in December 1790, A. P. vol. xxi, p. 566.

⁵ *Les Lauriers du Fauxbourg Saint-Antoine ou le Prix de la Bastille Renversée du lundi 20 juillet 1789*, (Paris, 1789) Brit. Lib. R.62, no. 12, p. 2.

⁶ For the publication of death notices concerning those of quite modest background, see C. Jones, 'the Great Chain of Buying: Medical Advertisement, the Bourgeois Public Sphere and the Origins of the French Revolution', A. H. R. vol. ci, (1996) pp. 13-40, p. 20. On the lavish funerals enjoyed by the even moderately wealthy, see F. Lebrun, *Les Hommes et la Mort en Anjou aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles*, (Paris, 1975) pp. 341 ff, and McManners, *Death and the Enlightenment*, pp. 270 ff.

veut être pleuré après sa mort ne doit pas mourir à Paris; l'on y regarde passer un convoi avec une extrême indifférence.'⁸

The poor died as they had lived in eighteenth century Paris, harbouring few illusions, but death on July 14th was a different matter. These men had died heroically, 'en volant au secours de la patrie', and Paris was a city transformed: 'ce n'était plus Paris, mais une ville nouvelle et un peuple nouveau.'⁹ The sullen resignation that Mercier had described only a few years earlier suddenly evaporated as Parisians hastened to honour the 'ouvriers, des pères de familles... des honnêtes gens' who had given their lives for the *patrie*.¹⁰ In the weeks that followed the fall of the Bastille, the capital witnessed an unprecedented torrent of popular commemoration as crowds packed into churches all over the city to pay their respects to the memory of the *vainqueurs de la Bastille*. Dusson's lavish burial in Saint-Séverin on July 18th was only the first of many such ceremonies. More masses for the repose of the souls 'des héros de la liberté' soon followed in the parishes of Saint-Martin-des-Champs, Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois, Saint-Sulpice, Saint-Jacques-l'Hôpital, Saint-Eustache, Saint Nicolas-des-Champs, the Petits-Augustins, the Petits Pères du Nazareth, the Récollets, Saint-Étienne-du-Mont, and even in Notre-Dame.¹¹ Spared the customary indignities, the tradesmen and shopkeepers who had died at the Bastille, these 'généreuses défenseurs de la Patrie', were buried with all the ritual and rhetorical exuberance that had so recently been the preserve of *les grands*.¹²

Typical of these services was that decided by the district assembly of Saint-Nicolas du Chardonnet across the river from the Bastille. Announcing its intention to follow the 'usage antique, consacré primitivement à honorer la vertu', the district decided to hold a 'fête patriotique' to honour the memory of 'ceux qui mouraient pour la patrie' on Tuesday, August 8th.¹³ Despite the district's cursory reference to classical precedent, this 'fête patriotique' turned out to be a very Catholic affair. On the appointed

⁷ J. Ménétra, *Journal de ma Vie*, D. Roche, ed. (Paris, 1982) pp. 87 and 124.

⁸ Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*, vol. i, p. 644.

⁹ Hardy, *Mes loisirs...*, vol. viii, pp. 395-6 and A. M. no. 37, 8 août 1789, p. 306.

¹⁰ *Les Lauriers du Fauxbourg Saint-Antoine*, p. 6.

¹¹ *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 6, 22 août 1789, p. 13.

¹² *Les Lauriers du Fauxbourg Saint-Antoine*, p. 7.

¹³ *Fête funèbre célébrée par les district et commune de Saint-Nicolas du Chardonnet, le 8 août 1789 en l'honneur des braves citoyens qui sont morts pour la défense de la patrie*, (Paris, 1789) B. N. Lb39/7706, p. 3.

morning, church bells pealed to summon the people to the Bernardins' chapel to attend a requiem mass said by the *abbé* Cordier de Saint-Firmin and hear an oration by the *abbé* Saint-Martin, newly appointed chaplain to the district's Guardsmen. A crowd of over fifteen hundred, 'tous les ordres, tous les rangs confondus', mingled with celebrities like mayor Bailly and General Lafayette in the congregation. In the middle of the nave loomed an elaborate candle-lit cenotaph, decorated with laurel wreaths, and the attributes of the men it honoured, 'un bonnet de grenadier, un casque et un chapeau.' After mass ended, the congregation joined in a frugal repast, 'comme chez les premiers chrétiens', but even this was not the end of proceedings.¹⁴ Apparently spontaneously, or perhaps they had dined a little too well, the National Guards seized upon several of their number who had actually taken part in the fighting on the 14th, and carried them shoulder-high in a triumphant procession through the neighbourhood.

The whole spectacle was judged a great success, each scene a 'tableau patriotique' worthy of a free race, and such tableaux were a commonplace across Paris during these weeks.¹⁵ Some were undeniably more splendid than others. None other than the *Académie Royale de Musique* performed a new requiem by Gossec in Saint-Martin des Champs on August 5th, and not every district could boast the presence of a Lafayette or a Bailly at its mass.¹⁶ However, while the details varied from place to place, in one church a catafalque, in another a cenotaph, the most striking feature of these ceremonies is their uniformity. Each district stuck quite rigidly to the customary formula of a High Mass complete with black drapes and *De Profundis*. The respectable display of mourning was obligatory, indeed entry to Saint-Martin des Champs was forbidden to those not properly attired for the occasion, the arms of the National Guards were invariably reversed, and candles burned aplenty.¹⁷ In this familiar ritual world, each knew his place and everyone acted with due decorum. However, this homogeneity went beyond the ritual level, for the sermons that accompanied these solemnities also display a marked consistency of concerns. Whatever other issues these speakers might differ on, they agreed on one point: the

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 13.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁶ *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 4, 8 August 1789, p. 26.

¹⁷ Ibid.

duty to remember was, in the *abbé* Saint-Martin's words, imposed by the twin virtues of 'la piété et le patriotisme.'¹⁸

Piety, of course, imposed its own specific obligations, and foremost amongst them was the Christian virtue of charity. Within a few days of the Bastille's capture, Bessin, the commander of the newly formed National Guards of the Saint-Mery district, journeyed to Versailles to remind the deputies of their debt to the still restive *faubourg* Saint-Antoine: 'vous êtes les sauveurs de la patrie, mais vous-mêmes vous avez des sauveurs.'¹⁹ His pleading resulted in a voluntary collection which produced 45,000 *livres* on the spot, the bulk of it coming from the archbishop of Paris, but no specific arrangements were made to provide assistance for the injured and the bereaved.²⁰ By the end of the month, an ad-hoc committee of veterans had been organised to compose an authoritative record of those who took part in the siege, and to lobby the authorities for some official recognition.²¹ Compiling a satisfactory register proved time-consuming, but the final list of 863 bona fide *vainqueurs* was completed by October, and quickly received the Commune's imprimatur.²² However, despite increasingly insistent lobbying over the winter, the Assembly's overworked *Comité des Pensions* was in no hurry to deal with the *vainqueurs'* claims for recompense, and the matter languished for the best part of a year.²³ It was not until June 1790, as preparations for the Federation were gathering momentum, that the deputies finally yielded to the *vainqueurs'* demands, and bestowed an impressive array of certificates, mock-Roman uniforms and engraved sabres on the veterans. These baubles were doubtless welcome, but the pensions that accompanied them probably meant more to those left incapacitated or bereaved by the siege. When these pensions were finally paid, the Assembly's praise of 'l'héroïque intrépidité des

¹⁸ *Discours prononcé pendant une cérémonie funèbre consacrée à la mémoire des citoyens morts pour le salut de la patrie, le samedi 8 août 1789*, (Paris, 1789) B. N. Lb39/7706, p. 7.

¹⁹ A. M. vol. i, 18 July 1789, p. 174.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ On the organisation of the *vainqueurs*, see H.-J. Lüsebrink and R. Reichardt, *The Bastille: A History of a Symbol of Despotism and Freedom*, (Durham N. C., 1997) pp. 87-91.

²² S. Lacroix, ed. *Actes de la Commune de Paris pendant la Révolution*, 16 vols., (Paris, 1894-1914) vol. iii, p. 19.

²³ See for example, the demand for recognition in Hulin's embittered *Appel à l'Assemblée Nationale, à celle de la Commune et aux districts de Paris, pour et au nom des volontaires nationaux de la Bastille*, A. N. C/35/298², no. 1842.

vainqueurs de la Bastille' was lavish, but anything more than kind words had been a long time coming.²⁴

In the meantime, charity was a private matter, and the authorities' neglect forced the *vainqueurs* and their communities to fend for themselves. Numerous families had been left penniless by the death of a husband or father during the fighting,²⁵ some without even the means of paying for their loved ones' burial, a catastrophe in a world where even the rudiments of a 'decent funeral' marked the last dividing line between respectable poverty and utter destitution. As a result, the commemoration of the *vainqueur* was indelibly marked by a sense of moral and social obligation towards the memory of the dead and by a compulsion to provide a fitting tribute in his burial. Given the significance of the *vainqueurs*' sacrifice, this was the only decent thing to do, but this sense of responsibility also embraced the welfare of the widowed and orphaned. As Boucher of the Saint-Étienne du Mont district explained in July:

ce sont des ouvriers, des pères de famille... nos frères, nos amis, nos concitoyens qui après avoir versé leur sang pour nous, réclament, pour leurs femmes et leurs enfants un morceau de pain que nous ne pourrions refuser à nos ennemis.²⁶

In the artisanal world of the *faubourgs*, this emphasis on the familiarity of the dead, and on society's duties towards them was particularly resonant. Boucher's assertion of moral and civic solidarity echoed the age-old practices of the lay religious brotherhoods, tradesmen's confraternities and *compagnonnages* and their 'seemingly obsessive concern with funerals for their members'.²⁷ In many respects, the *vainqueurs* inherited this sense of corporate identity and the social obligations that went with it, and accordingly, collections to pay for their comrades' funerals and to assist the bereaved were high on their agenda in the masses of the autumn.²⁸

²⁴ A. P. vol. xvi, p. 371.

²⁵ According to the accounts drawn up by the Comité des Pensions in December 1790, eighteen widows were left in need of immediate assistance as a result of the fighting on the 14th of July, while another twenty-five pensions were awarded to men left permanently disabled by the fighting. A. P. vol. xxi, pp. 566-7.

²⁶ *Les Lauriers du Fauxbourg Saint-Antoine*, p. 6.

²⁷ The parallels between the communitarian concerns of the *vainqueurs* and those of the traditional confraternities and artisanal *compagnonnages* seem particularly marked in this respect, see W. H. Sewell, *Work and Revolution in France: the language of labour from the old regime to 1848*, (Cambridge, 1980) p. 36.

²⁸ On the 12th of August, the collection in the church of the Petits-Pères de Nazareth, for example, was divided between those widowed and orphaned by the fighting at the Bastille and the poor of the parish. *L'Héroïsme National: Oraison funèbre prononcée le mercredi 12 août 1789 dans l'église des PP. de Nazareth, après le service solennel consacré à la mémoire des Citoyens morts glorieusement à la prise de la Bastille*, (Paris, 1789), B. L. F. R. 371, no. 5, p. 16.

Long after the capture of the Bastille had become a political *cliché*, this sense of moral community continued to play an important part in defining the commemoration of the *vainqueurs*. In February 1790, for example, the *abbé* Le Clerc concluded a sermon in Saint-Eustache by reminding his congregation of its on-going responsibility towards the children of the fallen.²⁹ It seems, however, that no such prompting was necessary. When one of the *vainqueurs*, Fousset, died in early June 1790, his comrades arranged and paid for his funeral and organised a collection to support his widow from amongst the 'plus de 20,000 citoyens' from the *faubourg* Saint-Antoine who joined the cortège to honour his memory.³⁰ Even allowing for a degree of patriotic hyperbole, the presence of such a crowd at the last rites of a *homme du peuple* demonstrates the extent to which the community felt personally involved in the memory of these local heroes. Boucher's insistence that these were 'nos frères,' was not simply a fashionable affectation of fraternity; it was, as often as not, a statement of fact. In a city where the neighbourhood constituted 'the hub of daily life,' the *vainqueurs* were not just anonymous heroes, but husbands and fathers, neighbours and friends.³¹ They were familiar faces from the *quartier* and they left behind widows and orphans whose plight was a constant reminder of the Assembly's negligence. In the tightly-knit world of the *faubourgs*, remembrance meant more than paying lip-service to the pieties of parliamentary rhetoric: it was a personal affair, a matter of local pride and an expression of genuine grief.

As with any funeral ceremony, there was a private dimension to these rites. In one parish after another, huge crowds gathered to pay their respects to the dead, and to offer some consolation to the bereaved. However, beyond these personal concerns, these memorial services also attempted a far more daunting task, a task that transcended the familiar language of sorrow and solace. In commemorating the memory of the *vainqueur*, these masses also sought to find an appropriate vocabulary to describe the events of mid-July, and to give meaning to them. Given the clergy's central rôle in these services, it is hardly surprising that this language was suffused

²⁹ *Discours prononcé dans l'église de St. Eustache le mercredi 24 février 1790 à l'occasion de la messe que le district a fait célébrer pour le repos de l'âme des citoyens mort en combattant pour la liberté*, (Paris, 1790) B. L. F.1085.24, p. 17.

³⁰ *Chronique de Paris*, 16 juin 1790, no. 167, p. 666.

³¹ D. Garrioch, *Neighbourhood and Community in Paris, 1740-1790*, (Cambridge, 1986) p. 29.

with the sacred, but the sheer dominance of this idiom is remarkable. Allusions to the antique virtues of Rome and Sparta were occasionally heard in these rites of remembrance, and a few nods were cast in the direction of fashionable *sensibilité*, but these lonely examples of enlightened erudition were all but drowned out by a wealth of scriptural references.³² One after another, and several of these sermons were repeated at more than one service, the likes of Dom Balleul, Claude Fauchet and the *abbé* Saint-Martin embraced the Revolution as the will of God, the wondrous unfolding of His design for France. In sermon after sermon, the events of July were described in almost biblical terms as the deliverance of the people from injustice, a miraculous transformation heralding the rebirth of the nation under the auspices of the best of kings, Louis XVI. As the *abbé* Saint-Martin explained on August 8th, the *vainqueurs* were the instruments of a higher power, and their destiny was to 'unir inviolablement le meilleur des rois au peuple le plus fait pour être gouverné par des monarques justes et sensibles.'³³ Claude Fauchet was less enthused about the virtues of kingship than this, but his interpretation of recent events was no less explicit on this point. As he informed a congregation on August 5th: 'voyons la justice de la providence dans l'établissement de la Liberté Française.'³⁴ In 1789, Revolutionary regeneration had a distinctly sacred hue.

Fauchet's *Discours sur la Liberté Française* represents the clearest statement of this providential account of the Revolution's progress, but it also stands out from among the many patriotic sermons delivered during these weeks. First delivered in the city-centre parish of Saint-Jacques et les Saints-Innocents on 4 August, the *Discours* was little short of a triumph. The *Chronique de Paris* published extensive extracts, acclaiming 'la fougue et le ton saccadé de son style' and the generally fastidious

³² Significantly, the most ostentatiously sentimental of these speeches was also the only one delivered by a layman, the lawyer and future *conventionnel*, Charles-Nicolas Osselin. *Discours funèbre prononcé par M. Osselin, avocat, président du district des Petits-Augustins, après la messe patriotique que l'Assemblée a fait célébrer en l'église de Saint Sulpice, par les R.P. Augustins, le lundi, 10 Août, 1789, pour le repos de l'âme des citoyens morts en combattants pour la patrie*, (Paris, 1789) B. N. Lb40/1500.

³³ *Discours prononcé pendant une cérémonie funèbre consacrée à la mémoire des citoyens morts pour le salut de la patrie; le samedi 8 août 1789, en présence de MM. De la Commune et district de Saint-Nicolas du Chardonnet; le mardi 18, en présence de MM. Du district de Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois; le mercredi 19, à Saint-Sulpice; par M. L'abbé de Saint-Martin... Les représentants de la Commune. Au profit des pauvres du district de Saint-Nicolas du Chardonnet*, (Paris, 1789) B.N. Lb39 7706, pp. 1-2.

³⁴ C. Fauchet, *Discours sur la liberté française prononcé le mercredi 4 août 1789, dans l'église paroissiale de S. Jacques et des SS. Innocens...*, (s.l., s.d.) B. N. Lb39/2155, p. 9.

Révolutions de Paris was equally forthcoming.³⁵ More importantly perhaps, the sermon went down exceptionally well with its immediate audience. As Bailly noted, Fauchet had 'transporta tous ses auditeurs', and after mass ended in Saint-Jacques, he was escorted in triumph to the Hôtel de Ville and awarded a civic crown by the Guardsmen of the district.³⁶ Success bred success; the *Discours* was soon repeated in Notre-Dame, and over the next few months, Fauchet was invited to speak at patriotic ceremonies all over the city. Already a prominent member of the Commune and soon to become the driving force behind the left-wing *Cercle Social* and its newspaper, the *Bouche de Fer*, Fauchet's reputation in the pulpit would prove a very useful accessory for a career in radical politics.³⁷

Long before the fall of the Bastille, Fauchet had built up a formidable reputation as an orator, but what was it that attracted so many accolades in the summer of 1789? Beyond his rhetorical brilliance and his impeccable revolutionary credentials lay a very clear political theology in which Revolution and Revelation combined to forge a radical programme for reform. For Fauchet, the July Revolution bore the unmistakable imprint of the divine. As he explained in August: 'ce n'est plus seulement le justice de la Nature, c'est celle de la Religion que nous devons reconnaître dans la Révolution que nous rend libres.'³⁸ In this light, the regeneration of France was not simply a political project; it was a moral task of biblical proportions, a 'seconde création.'³⁹ The language of the sacred permeated Fauchet's political vocabulary, but for all its scriptural overtones, his sermon was in no way sectarian, and he paid warm tribute to the *philosophes* and deputies who had paved the way for liberty.⁴⁰ However, while the Republic of Letters and the Assembly were given their due, the real heroes of the *Discours* were unquestionably the ordinary people of Paris. If one feature distinguished Fauchet's *Discours* from all the other

³⁵ *Chronique de Paris*, no. 1, 24 August 1789, p. 2, and *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 4, 8 August 1789, p. 20. By comparison, Loustalot was a good deal less charitable concerning the *abbé* Saint-Martin's oratorical efforts. *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 6, 22 August 1789, p. 14.

³⁶ *Mémoires de Bailly*, vol. ii, p. 222, and *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 4, 8 August 1789, p. 20.

³⁷ For Fauchet's subsequent career, see J. Charrier, *Claude Fauchet, Évêque Constitutionnel de Calvados, 1744-1793*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1912), R. B. Rose, 'Claude Fauchet, 1744-1793, and the French Revolutionary Origins of Christian Democracy', *Australian Journal of French Studies*, (1986) pp. 83-101, G. Kates, *The Cercle Social, the Girondins and the French Revolution*, (Princeton, 1985) and O. Hufton, *Bayeux in the late Eighteenth Century*, (Oxford, 1967) esp. pp. 174-196.

³⁸ *Discours sur la liberté française...*, p. 6.

³⁹ Fauchet, *Éloge civique de Benjamin Franklin*, p. 1.

⁴⁰ *Discours sur la liberté française*, p. 6.

sermons delivered that autumn, it was that he espoused the cause of the *vainqueurs* wholeheartedly. While other preachers had certain reservations about the *vainqueurs'* actions, Fauchet positively revelled in their heroics and was unique in excusing their excesses by recalling 'les crimes de vingt Règles' and the machinations of a vindictive court aristocracy.⁴¹ Far from being the shadowy figures described by most preachers, Fauchet's veterans were instead endowed with an almost Christ-like mystique: in giving their lives 'pour sauver nos frères', their sacrifice was re-invented as a modern Calvary for the redemption of mankind.⁴² For Fauchet and for his congregation, the obligation to remember these martyrs was not just a civic duty, it was inscribed 'dans les principes de l'Évangile.'⁴³ As if this argument was not convincing enough, even the *mise en scène* in the nave of Saint-Jacques served to emphasise Fauchet's point. In the summer of 1789, the heroes of the Bastille were celebrated in the name of the crucified Christ that hung over their catafalque. (See figure 3)

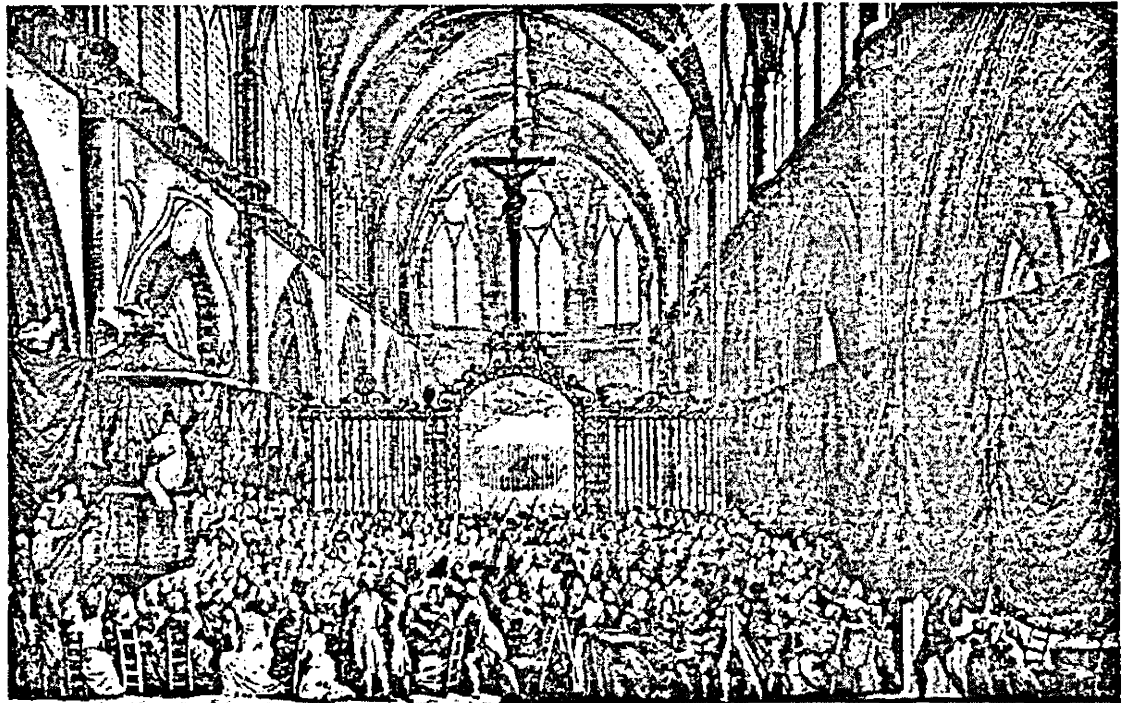


Figure 3, 'Service funèbre à Saint-Jacques l'hôpital le 5 août 1789 en l'honneur des citoyens morts au siège de la Bastille', Prieur, *Tableaux Historiques de la Révolution française*, no. 22.

In the light of the subsequent 'dérapage' of Revolutionary politics, Fauchet's theology of Revolution may seem just as eccentric as the career path that led him from the

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 14.

⁴² Ibid., p. 9.

lucrative sinecure of *prédicateur du Roi* to the rather less rewarding post of 'prédicateur ordinaire du peuple Parisien', but it was not.⁴⁴ Certainly, this providential account would ultimately become the preserve of reactionary propagandists eager to depict the Revolution as a scourge visited upon a corrupt nation by a wrathful deity. In de Maistre's apocalyptic *Considérations*, Providence joined the ranks of the Counter-Revolution, but in 1789, Fauchet's version of events was common currency. Clerics constantly invoked 'le doigt de l'Éternel' to explain the events of the summer, but more importantly, so did the laity, and the same language can be found across a broad spectrum of opinion.⁴⁵ Neither Siméon Hardy nor the marquis de Ferrières were much given to flights of fancy, but both were convinced that the extraordinary events at the Bastille could not be explained by reason alone. As a kind of calm returned to the capital, Hardy confided to his diary that there had been something 'absolument surnaturel' about the fall of the Bastille, while Ferrières, writing to his sister soon after the crisis had passed, gave thanks for the Assembly's deliverance, explaining that 'la Providence conduit tout'.⁴⁶ Even Desmoulins seemed to lend credence to this vision, when he suggested that the benign intervention of the city's guardian angel was apparent in the July Revolution, and his *Discours de la Lanterne* concluded confidently that 'la France est le royaume de la providence'.⁴⁷ Desmoulins' choice of language may not have been entirely serious, but it reflected popular opinion and a year later, the *Chronique de Paris* could still find no more fitting vocabulary to describe the 'miracle' of the 14th of July.⁴⁸ Indeed, such was the ubiquity of this providential interpretation of events that it provoked a stormy reaction from at least one outraged non-believer. Sylvain Maréchal, only recently released from prison for the ill-concealed atheism of his *Almanach des honnêtes gens*, now lashed out at the message being propagated all over the city:

Vainqueur, sur les débris de la Bastille en cendre,
Étonné de ses droits, qu'il venait de reprendre,

⁴³ Ibid., p. 6.

⁴⁴ The *Chronique de Paris* baptised him such. By the mid-1780's, Fauchet's income from various benefices and sinecures stood at over 20,000 livres. *Chronique de Paris* no. 29, 21 September 1789, p. 114 and Charrier, *Claude Fauchet*, vol. i, p.

⁴⁵ Henri Grégoire's sermon in Saint-Germain-des-Prés is typical of this style of oratory. *Discours prononcé le jour de la Toussaint 1789, en l'église de l'Abbaye de Saint-Germain-des-Prés pour la bénédiction des quatre flammes de la milice nationale de ce District, par M. Grégoire, curé d'Embermenil, membre de l'Assemblée Nationale*, (Paris, 1789) B. N. Lb40/1570, p. 3.

⁴⁶ Hardy, *Mes Loisirs*, vol. viii, p. 394 and Ferrières, *Correspondance Inédit*, p. 96.

⁴⁷ Desmoulins, *Discours de la Lanterne aux Parisiens* in Desmoulins, *Oeuvres*, vol. i, p. 98.

⁴⁸ *Chronique de Paris*, no. 189, 8 juillet 1790, p. 754.

On entendit longtemps le peuple de Paris,
 Couvert d'un sang impur, répéter à grands cris:
 "Providence divine, à qui tout est facile,
 C'est toi qui nous fis vaincre..."
 Eh non! Peuple imbécile!
 Tes piques ont tout fait...
 N'attends rien de cet Être-Suprême...⁴⁹

Maréchal's bitterness is a measure of how widely held such unenlightened views were, but, like Maréchal himself, such indignation was the exception rather the rule in the summer of 1789. As Groethuysen suggests: 'la foi des humbles ne pourrait admettre que Dieu s'en désintéressât', and Fauchet skilfully translated this deep-rooted assumption into a political doctrine.⁵⁰ He spoke the people's language and in return, the 'peuple imbécile', to borrow Maréchal's unflattering description, lapped up Fauchet's message. In a city where popular tradition held that Christ turned, with his last breath on the cross, to bless France, Fauchet's assertion that Providence watched over the nation was not just speculation; it was simple common sense.⁵¹

Fauchet was certainly a stirring orator, but his undeniable charisma and unparalleled ability to tap into the hopes and fears of the dispossessed only partially explain his phenomenal appeal. His sermon represented that rare thing in mid-1789, a coherent explanation of recent events, but his unconditional celebration of the *vainqueurs* also articulated the *faubourgs*' pride in their achievement; a pride that the print shops of the rue Saint-Jacques were quick to translate into dozens of hastily executed engravings and portraits. Within weeks of the siege, entrepreneurial Parisian engravers such as Bance, Basset, Chereau, Cornu, Janinet and Gouthier, and their provincial counterparts like Jean-Baptiste Letourmy had bestowed an equally iconic status upon the *vainqueur* with dozens of hastily executed battle scenes and portraits of the heroes of the day.⁵² Hawked around the city and countryside by *colporteurs*, alongside their more usual merchandise of cheap devotional images and topical

⁴⁹ Cited in Robinet, *Le Mouvement Religieux*, vol. i, p. 409.

⁵⁰ B. Groethuysen, *Origines de l'esprit bourgeois en France*, (Paris, 1927) p. 25.

⁵¹ For this popular legend, see J. Kaplow, *The Names of Kings: the Parisian Labouring Poor in the Eighteenth Century*, (New York, 1972) p. 112.

⁵² See for example, Bance, *Prise de la Bastille*, B. N. Estampes, coll. de Vinck, no. 1591, Chereau, *Prise de la Bastille*, Cornu, *Première attaque de la prise de la Bastille le 14 juillet*, Gouthier, *Le siège de la Bastille prise par le bourgeoisie*, B. N. Estampes, coll. Hennin, no. 10330 and Letourmy, *Récit mémorable du siège de la Bastille... couplets dédiés à la Nation par M. Déduit*, B. N. Estampes, coll. de Vinck, no. 1599.

broadsides, these prints aimed explicitly at a popular mass market, illustrating and interpreting the events of the day in a rough and ready, but nonetheless, accessible manner.⁵³ Offering their audience a confident and frequently candid account of the *journée* in portrait and verse, these works celebrated the actions of the Parisian crowd and vindicated the justice of its cause in exuberant terms.⁵⁴ Their artistry left much to be desired but these crude etchings and woodcuts extolled 'le courage, le sentiments du Patriotisme' of the 'braves du fauxbourg St. Antoine', or applauded individuals such as the grenadier Arné, the apprentice Jean-Baptiste Humbert, the sixty year old Jean-Baptiste Cretain, or 'le brave Maillard' with gusto.⁵⁵ Like the market-sensitive printers, Fauchet's oft-repeated sermon reflected this popular enthusiasm, celebrating the heroism of the *vainqueur*, and sanctifying his memory with a warmth and a respect that few of his *confrères* could muster. Unlike the other clerics who conducted these rites, Fauchet was a veteran of the Bastille himself, and as such, he occupied a unique place in the affections of the *petit peuple*, a place illustrated graphically in his immediately recognisable presence in the foreground of Claude Cholat's remarkable eye-witness drawing of the siege.⁵⁶ As if to emphasise this illustrious past, Fauchet's references to the *vainqueurs* seem to switch randomly between *nous* and *vous* in a rhetorical gesture of solidarity. Perhaps there is an element of self-aggrandisement in this apparently arbitrary inter-changeability of pronouns, but this seems an excessively uncharitable interpretation. Fauchet had shared the same risks as the men he acclaimed, and he could sympathise with their cause: it had been his own. While others might pay tribute to the fallen heroes, this element of empathy was missing, but more importantly, it was also undesirable.

Fauchet's *Discours* was a triumph, but however well received his sermon was, it was far from assuaging the fears raised by the events of mid-July. As one engraver in the rue Saint-Jacques noted beneath a portrait of two *vainqueurs*: 'ceux qui l'on nommait

⁵³ Even the most sophisticated examples of the genre, works such as Janinet's *Gravures Historiques des principaux événements de la Révolution Française* were well within the means of most tradesmen and shopkeepers with individual prints available at just eight sous a copy. E. Dacier, 'Les Gravures Historiques de Janinet', *l'Amateur d'Estampes*, vol. 31, (1928) pp. 161 ff, and vol. 32, (1929) pp. 14 ff.

⁵⁴ Many of these prints included a brief explanatory text and a patriotic song, set to a familiar air.

⁵⁵ For Arné and Humbert, see the anon. *Portrait d'après nature du sr. Harné et du sr. Humbert*, B. N. Estampes, col. De Vinck, no. 1646, and for Maillard, see Janinet, *Le Brave Maillard...*, B. N., Estampes, coll. de Vinck, no. 1548. Cretaine featured prominently in the anon. print, *Pro Patria vincere aut mori dédié à la Nation*, Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Western Mss. coll. WEP, 688.

⁵⁶ For Fauchet's rôle during the siege, see Marmontel, *Mémoires*, (Paris, 1999 ed.) p. 450, Bailly, *Mémoires*, vol. i, p. 377 and Claude Cholat, *La Prise de la Bastille*, Musée Carnavalet, inv. D.8132.

canaille, se trouvant trop courroucés, ayant serré leur tenailles, quelques-uns en sont pincés.⁵⁷ If the viewer failed to see the humour in this rather mordant witticism, he doubtless recognised the sense of menace implicit in it: the people had exercised their authority and might have recourse to their 'tenailles' again if necessary. For the God-fearing, law-abiding property-holders, in short for the bourgeoisie who came to power in 1789, this prospect resurrected an atavistic sense of dread that had lain dormant all century. The capture of the citadel was greeted with euphoria in the *faubourgs*, but in the more respectable quarters of the city, the celebrations were tinged with a mixture of fear and uncertainty. As news of the bloodshed at the Bastille spread across the city, Siméon Hardy's instinctive reaction to this 'triste journée' had been 'la plus amère douleur', and while a cautious optimism eventually overcame his early anxiety, Gilbert Romme's verdict on the 14th was even more despondent.⁵⁸ Having initially welcomed the fall of the Bastille, his enthusiasm quickly waned in the face of the 'carnage infâme' that followed on the Place de Grève. For Romme, these scenes were a permanent reproach to the *vainqueur*, and he concluded ruefully: 'le patriotisme seul ne peut pas être aussi sanguinaire'.⁵⁹

Patriotism and bloodshed: Robespierre found the dialectic between these two aspects of Revolution easy enough to resolve: 'la liberté publique, peu de sang répandu, quelques têtes abattues sans doute, mais des têtes coupables'.⁶⁰ His argument was seductively simple: the people had spoken, liberty was saved, and however grisly their fate, de Launay, Foulon and Berthier were guilty; but in 1789, few in the Assembly shared Robespierre's pellucid vision of right and wrong. On the contrary, the vast majority of his colleagues in Versailles found the incongruous alliance of liberty and 'quelque têtes abattues' unsettling to say the very least. The fear of mob rule haunted most minds in Versailles that week, and cast a long shadow over the Assembly's subsequent dealings with the capital and its unruly crowd.⁶¹ However, despite their reservations, many deputies and commentators were also painfully aware that this very same rabble had stood between the Assembly and dissolution, if not worse, at the hands of royal troops. Writing on 24 July, the marquis de Ferrières confessed that 'la

⁵⁷ *Portrait d'après nature du Harnée... et du Sieur Humbert*, B. N. Estampes, coll. de Vinck, no. 1647.

⁵⁸ S. Hardy, *Mes Loisirs...*, 14th July 1789, B. N. ms. Fonds français, 6687, p. 389.

⁵⁹ Letter of the 27th or 28th July quoted in A. Galante Garrone, *Gilbert Romme: Histoire d'un révolutionnaire, 1750-1795*, (Paris, 1971) pp. 173-4.

⁶⁰ Cited in G. Walter, *Robespierre*, (Paris, 1946) p. 80.

prise de la Bastille nous sauva', but nevertheless went on to admit that: 'Je n'aurais jamais cru qu'un peuple aimable et bon se fût porté à de tels excès'.⁶² When even radicals like Prudhomme and Desmoulins struggled to justify the 'affreuses' or 'révoltantes' scenes of the 14 and 22 July, it is hardly surprising that the mild-mannered marquis found the situation so perplexing.⁶³ Ferrières' quandary, his uneasy position midway between Romme's revulsion and Robespierre's acquiescence, was that of the Revolutionary generation itself.

Fauchet's *tour de force* overlooked these concerns, but few of his confreres could countenance violating the fifth commandment with such complacency, and as a result, their sermons frequently sidestepped the bloodshed at the Bastille, and very often the *vainqueurs* themselves, in a few embarrassed sentences. In part, the sheer anonymity of the dead imposed certain limitations on the language that accompanied these rites. Eyewitness accounts of the siege proliferated in late July and early August, but they generally furnished little useful information about the identity of the deceased, preferring in the main, to concentrate on the valour of a few well-known survivors such as Elie and Humbert. Indeed, even the most basic details, the names, occupations and families of the fallen, proved elusive until the *vainqueur's* own list was finally compiled in October. Until then, the stories of the dead remained largely untold. This glaring lack of information was an obvious constraint, but the orator's dilemma was further compounded by the absence of any satisfactory rhetorical precedent for the celebration of these unknown heroes. To exalt the memory of the people in arms was uncharted territory in 1789, and neither the conventional *oraison funèbre* nor the enlightened *éloge* offered any real guidance on the matter. Both were familiar genres, but both had always been the preserve of the celebrated individual, the nobleman, general or man of genius whose exploits were well known and whose biography could be framed within a familiar narrative structure. By contrast, the memory of the *vainqueur* confronted the aspiring elegist with more stylistic questions than answers, questions that most of these sermons preferred simply not to address.

⁶¹ On the deputies' reaction to popular violence in July, see Tackett, *Becoming a Revolutionary*, p. 168.

⁶² Ferrières, *Correspondance Inédit*, (Paris, 1932) pp. 96-7.

⁶³ *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 1, p. 17. Desmoulins' comments on the 'précipitant' execution of Foulon appeared in his *Discours de la lanterne aux Parisiens*. Desmoulins, *O. C.* vol. i, p. 14.

Unable to celebrate the *vainqueurs* as individuals, most orators instead sought refuge in hazy generalisations about the sublime glory of 'mourir pour la patrie' or the courage of 'ces citoyens vertueuses dont le sang a coulé pour la liberté'.⁶⁴ Having dismissed the *vainqueurs* as quickly as possible, they then moved on to consider the merits of the new authorities with what was, comparatively speaking, a lavish attention to detail. In one sermon after another, Louis XVI was hailed as the 'digne héritier du sceptre de Louis XII et d'Henri le Grand,' Necker lauded as 'l'ange tutélaire de la France,' and Lafayette and Bailly fêted as 'les hommes faits pour présider'.⁶⁵ The contrast between the perfunctory tributes paid to the *vainqueurs* and these effusive accolades is instructive. Underlying all the platitudes about dying for liberty was a determination to bury the past and the memory of the *faubourgs*' eruption into political life with it. With a respectable National Guard now firmly in place to 'assurer votre repos, vos biens, vos maisons, votre vie même', the heroes of the people could be laid to rest and quietly forgotten.⁶⁶

As the autumn wore on and burying the dead gave way to blessing the colours of the Guards' battalions, the clergy's reluctance to confront the memory of the dead became even more marked.⁶⁷ By September, Fauchet's providential account of the Revolution was still standard, but it had been dramatically re-configured by his confreres to meet the needs of the emerging civic order. While these later sermons continued to welcome the Revolution as God's will, and paid token tribute to 'nos frères immolés pour la liberté', their tone had changed completely. Whereas Fauchet had celebrated the heroes of the *faubourgs* in the language of scripture, his colleagues now used that same language to diminish the *vainqueurs*' rôle in the Revolution. If few went to quite the same lengths as the abbé Barret, who's rambling address on September 16 made no mention of the *vainqueurs* whatsoever, the palpable discomfort of his confreres when confronted by the reality of revolutionary violence left them no alternative but to try to re-interpret it by marginalizing the memory of

⁶⁴ *L'Héroïsme National...*, p. 4, and Osselin, *Discours funèbre prononcé par M. Osselin...*, p. 4.

⁶⁵ *L'Héroïsme National...*, pp. 14, 15, and 12.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁶⁷ For an account of these sixty services, see Vielh de Varenne, *Description curieuse et intéressante des drapeaux de l'armée nationale parisienne*. (Paris, 1790) B. N. Lb39/ 3762.

those who had perpetrated it.⁶⁸ As the provincial of the Capuchins, Zénon de Crépy explained to his congregation on September 24:

La prise de la Bastille, premier triomphe de la liberté, est évidemment un miracle de Providence. Plus vous approfondissez les détails de cette expédition, moins vous êtes tentés d'en attribuer le succès au sort des armes ou à la valeur de nos guerriers. Vous ignorez même le nom des chefs et des citoyens à qui vous devez cette victoire. En un mot l'obscurité répandue sur ce grand événement est telle, qu'après le plus sûr examen, on n'y voit plus que la main de Dieu.⁶⁹

The *abbé* Chaix d'Est Ange, almoner of la Salpêtrière, was more forthright still. Although he acclaimed the *vainqueurs* as 'martyrs de la liberté,' he was adamant that they owed their victory to 'le bras d'un Dieu vengeur.'⁷⁰ The implications of this shift in emphasis were clear; reduced to the status of puppets in a drama they could not comprehend and had never controled, the crowd's claim to be a political actor in its own right was rhetorically neutralised. Sanctifying the heroes of Sainte-Antoine as the chosen instruments of divine will may have been a slightly unsavoury solution to the problems posed by the new doctrine of popular sovereignty, but it was a price worth paying to keep the rabble in check. As order sprang from chaos, the violence that had convulsed Paris in July was discursively exorcised, and both speakers and audiences took solace in depicting a happy ending to the Revolution. The spectre of Foulon and Berthier's severed heads had concentrated minds wonderfully, and so, the *vainqueurs* were politely, but firmly, invited to return to the obscurity of the *faubourgs*. Very quickly, the need to forget the dead had become essential to the political strategy of Revolutionary remembrance.

After the masses were said and the crowds had gone home, what would become of the memory of the *vainqueur's* sacrifice? Despite the lofty eulogies, Prudhomme was

⁶⁸ While the *abbé* Barret lavished praise on Louis XVI, Lafayette, Bailly, and the Guards themselves, he did not mention the *vainqueurs* once in the course of a thirty-two-page address. L.-F.-A. Barret, *Discours pour la bénédiction des drapeaux de la Garde Nationale Parisienne prononcé devant le district des Enfants-Rouges le 16 septembre 1789 et le lendemain devant celui de Saint Philipe du Roule par M. l'abbé Barret*, (Paris, 1789) B. N. Lb40/1389.

⁶⁹ Zénon de Crépy, *Discours prononcé le 24 septembre pour la bénédiction des drapeaux du district des Capucins de la rue Saint-Honoré, par le P. Zénon, provincial de cet Ordre*, (Paris, 1789) B. N. Lb40/236, p. 12.

⁷⁰ Chaix d'Est Ange, *De l'influence de la religion sur le patriotisme et la liberté, Discours pour la bénédiction des drapeaux du district de Saint-Victor*, (Paris, 1789) B. N. Lb40/1657, pp. 20-1.

quick to realise that, in the absence of any lasting monument, 'l'oubli dévouera bientôt... ils seront comme s'ils n'eussent jamais existé.' To save the *vainqueurs* from this fate, he proposed the immediate erection of a statue dedicated 'à la liberté, à la patrie, et à leurs défenseurs.'⁷¹ Few would argue with celebrating the first two principles, but honouring the latter quickly became a moot point once the Royal troops had dispersed and liberty seemed secure. As the locus of commemoration shifted from the pulpit to the draftsman's blueprint and the painter's canvas, the scruples that had troubled the clergy during the autumn of 1789 continued to haunt the memory of the *vainqueur*.

The sculptor, Foureau was one of the few to respond to Prudhomme's call. As a resident of the *faubourg* Saint-Antoine himself, Foureau's proposal for a public monument in honour of the *vainqueurs* reflected that community's will to remember its dead. Appropriately enough, he launched his scheme in the *Révolutions de Paris* with a call for subscriptions to raise a monument 'à la mémoire des citoyens morts en combattant pour la liberté Française, au siège de la Bastille, le 14 juillet 1789'.⁷² His appeal made all the right noises about honouring the memory of the dead, but the accompanying design, although well meaning, was little short of a shambles. Foureau's sketch hovers uneasily between a two-dimensional backdrop depicting the capture of the Bastille, with a more obviously sculptural composition in the foreground, in which life-size figures of Immortality, France, and the city of Paris gather around a sarcophagus bearing the bodies of the fallen heroes. (See figure 4) This messy jumble of allegorical motifs and historical characters with a few neo-classical props thrown in for good measure contravened virtually every accepted principle of composition, but with a subscription rate of one and a half *sols*, Foureau was probably more interested in attracting investors than winning critical acclaim.⁷³ However, in a year when the authorities were inundated with expertly drawn designs for morally edifying statuary, this clumsy plan stood little chance of success. And yet, the undeniable inelegance of Foureau's design was the least of his concerns, for

⁷¹ *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 9, 9 September 1789, pp. 26 and 27.

⁷² 'Adresse aux citoyens du faubourg Saint-Antoine', *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 43, 7 May 1790, pp. 299-300.

⁷³ Marmontel, following Sulzer, had warned against just such a mélange, insisting that 'la représentation allégorique d'un événement ne renferme proprement rien d'historique'. 'Allégorie', *Supplément à l'Encyclopédie*, vol. ii, (Paris, 1776) pp. 298-308, p. 305. For the subscription rate, see Foureau's 'Adresse aux citoyens du faubourg Saint-Antoine', op cit, p. 299.

his monument was also hopelessly out of step with political reality. In the summer of 1790, when the *plan Demeunier* had just written 'passive citizens' out of Parisian politics, such a monument to the *vainqueurs* was all but doomed to failure. Perhaps Foureau knew this, perhaps his project was a belated rallying cry, a call to remember the part the *petit peuple* had played in rescuing the Revolution from repression, but if so, the images he chose could not but alienate the 'bourgeois aristocracy' that had just come to power in Paris.⁷⁴ Motifs of France and Immortality were all very well, but the bodies of the fallen were less welcome, and the sight of de Launay being led from the Bastille in the background was quite simply in bad taste. The problem with Foureau's design was not artistic, it was political: it commemorated the wrong event and honoured the wrong people.



Figure 4, Foureau, 'Adresse aux citoyens du faubourg Saint-Antoine', *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 43, 7 May 1790, p. 299.

By the summer of 1790, a clear consensus had emerged in official circles: if any monument would celebrate the Revolution, it would celebrate Louis' momentous visit

⁷⁴ Originally coined by Louis-Marie Lulier, this phrase had become common currency in radical circles

to the Assembly on 15 July. The king's appearance before the deputies that morning was little short of abject, but it was immediately greeted as the long-awaited reconciliation of the monarch and his people. According to Boissy d'Anglas, 'jamais spectacle plus touchant' had ever been seen, and the next morning, Mounier captured the mood of the deputies by proposing that a monument to the king be erected on the ruins of the Bastille.⁷⁵ Overnight, Louis had become the 'bon roi, restaurateur de la liberté et du bonheur de la France', and the very next day, Bailly used the same formula to launch an identical scheme at the Hôtel de Ville.⁷⁶ Both suggestions were greeted with delirious applause, an applause which somewhat belies the steady erosion of royal prestige, the 'éclipse d'un soleil', that Annie Jourdan and Jeffrey Merrick have suggested was the defining feature of eighteenth century politics.⁷⁷ On the contrary, Louis' reception in the Assembly, and his ecstatic welcome in Paris two days later, seemed to herald a new dawn for the monarchy. The king may have been re-invented as the father of the nation, but he was far from eclipsed, and it would take the complete failure of leadership that culminated in the fiasco at Varennes to squander the political credit that Louis had accumulated in the summer of 1789.

In the meantime, Mounier's proposal for a statue of the king was soon followed by a host of similar schemes designed to fix the paternity of the regenerated nation around the image of the king as the *père des Français*. De Varenne's *Projet d'un monument à ériger pour le Roi* followed soon after, with its plan to raise a statue of the king standing in his ceremonial robes, about to be embraced by Henri IV. To complete the already clichéd analogy with Louis' beloved ancestor, de Varenne's statue was intended to face its equestrian counterpart by Tacca directly across the Pont Neuf, and the following February, the future regicide Antoine-François Sergent chose the same spot for a rather more modest monument dedicated to the virtues of the 'premier Roi citoyen.'⁷⁸ Elsewhere, Gois proposed building an enormous statue of the 'père des

by mid-1790. R. B. Rose, *The Making of the Sans-Culottes*, (Manchester, 1982) p. 74.

⁷⁵ Letter of July 15, 1789, in Boissy d'Anglas, 'Lettres Inédites sur la Révolution Française', *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire du Protestantisme Français*, vol. 75, (1926) pp. 282-99, and pp. 425-35, p. 290, and *A. M.*, no. 19, 16 July 1789, p. 164.

⁷⁶ *A. M.*, no. 19, 16 July 1789, p. 164, and Bailly, *Mémoires*, vol. ii, p. 58.

⁷⁷ For the desacralisation thesis, see Jourdan, *Les Monuments de la Révolution*, p. 33, and J. Merrick, *The Desacralisation of the French Monarchy in the Eighteenth Century*, (Baton Rouge, 1990).

⁷⁸ de Varenne, *Projet d'un monument à ériger pour le Roi et Nosseigneurs des États Généraux*, B. N. Lb39/1687 and B. N. Estampes, coll. Hennin, no. 10831, and A.-F. Sergent, *Monument à la Gloire de Louis XVI*, (Paris, 1790) B. N. Lb40/341, p. 3.

Français', resplendent in his coronation robes and holding a copy of the Constitution, on the Place du Carrousel, while the octogenarian Mopinot de la Chapotte was ahead of his time in calling for the removal of Desjardin's statue of Louis XIV on the Place des Victoires.⁷⁹ In place of the 'outrageantes représentations' on its pedestal, he suggested raising a statue of Louis XVI as an object lesson in 'ce qui doit être un roi des Français, ce qui doivent être des Français soumis à un roi.'⁸⁰ 1790 witnessed an abundance of such schemes, but if their ambition and artistry varied enormously, their devotion to the monarch, and just as importantly, their neglect of the *vainqueur* was constant.

The speed with which these diverse, but symbolically indistinguishable designs appeared bears out Lynn Hunt's contention that a more benign representation of Louis XVI as the 'good father' had been evolving for some time before the Revolution, but despite the different styles and locations proposed, the overwhelming impression left by these plans is one of relentless uniformity.⁸¹ Admittedly, a few of the commemorative projects mooted in 1789 and 1790 were a little more adventurous. Nicolas-Marie Gatteaux, for example, proposed erecting a massive column on the site of the Bastille, crowned by a figure of Liberty standing astride a globe, but on the whole, such creativity remained in short supply throughout 1790.⁸² On the contrary, most schemes were content to recycle the same emblems of royal authority that had been used to honour French kings for over a century. While Liberty did make an occasional appearance in these plans, images of Henri IV, or Minerva or the equally conventional *Hercule Gallois* dominated the iconography of most of these designs.⁸³ Indeed, the architect Corbet felt so confident in this symbolic stasis that he decided to reissue an unchanged version of his 1784 *Projet d'une place publique à la gloire de*

⁷⁹ *Projet du Monument et fête patriotique par Gois, sculpteur du Roi...*, (Paris, 1790) B.N. Lb39/2933, and Mopinot de la Chapotte, A.-R., *Proposition d'un monument à élever dans la capitale de la France pour transmettre aux races futures l'époque de l'heureuse révolution qui l'a revivifiée sous le règne de Louis XVI*, (Paris, 1790), B.N. Lb 39/3785.

⁸⁰ Mopinot de la Chapotte, *Proposition d'un monument à élever dans la capitale*, p. 13.

⁸¹ L. Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*, (Berkeley, 1992) p. 20.

⁸² Nicolas-Marie Gatteaux, *Projet du monument pour consacrer la Révolution*, (Paris, s.d.) B. N. 4-V, piece 4905.

⁸³ On the rôle of Hercules in conventional Bourbon iconography, see P. Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV*, (New Haven, 1992) and R. Giesey, 'The King Imagined' in K. M. Baker, (ed.) *The Political Culture of the Old Regime*, (Oxford, 1987), pp. 41-59. Another surprisingly common theme in these designs was Louis' rôle in securing the freedom of the seas during the American War. See, for example, Gois, *Projet du Monument*, p. 5.

Louis XVI.⁸⁴ Corbet's lazy opportunism seems curiously oblivious to the enormous changes that had swept over France in the intervening years, but in a sense, it reflects the mood that prevailed among monumental artists throughout 1790. Unwilling, or perhaps simply unable, to forge a new symbolic arsenal with which to celebrate the emerging civic order, most artists instead sought refuge in the certainties of the past by attempting to fuse the iconographic confidence of the classical age with the more recent imagery of a rejuvenated paternalistic monarchy. Following the deputies' lead, they looked to the king as the cornerstone of the new régime and designed their monuments accordingly, enveloping the hapless Louis in the glorious attributes of his most celebrated predecessors. It was almost as if the Revolution had never happened.

The same might be said for the history painters who attempted to commemorate the new era. In this respect, Gabriel-François Doyen's *Programme du tableau qui doit représenter la Révolution avec les emblèmes pour donner au sujet la noblesse qu'il exige* typifies the artistic establishment's response to the Revolution throughout 1789 and 1790.⁸⁵ Conceived in mid-1790, even the title of the work is revealing. Concerned, above all, to ennoble a subject that he considered too disturbing to represent realistically, Doyen instinctively sought to defuse the memory of the previous summer's disorder with a reassuring re-affirmation of royal authority, and this decision is borne out in the extensive *dramatis personae* that grace the scene. Louis XVI and the royal family occupy centre stage, where the king, accompanied by the dauphin, is about to take his civic oath, under the benevolent eye of the 'ange tutélaire' of France. In the background, Bailly and Lafayette watch modestly from the wings, an unobtrusive allusion to the new dispensation, but their presence is easily overlooked as the viewer ponders a foreground crammed with antique deities and allegorical figures, conferring their ethereal blessing on the monarch while simultaneously heralding a new era of peace and prosperity. The scene is, in fact, an elaborate apotheosis: a glorification of monarchical mystique worthy of a Rubens or a Lebrun, and for that reason, the only reference to the events of July 14th is an oblique,

⁸⁴ Corbet, *Projet d'une place publique à la gloire de Louis XVI sur l'emplacement de la Bastille*, (Paris, 1790) B. N. Estampes, coll. de Winck, no. 1708.

⁸⁵ Doyen's *Programme* is reprinted in P. Bordes, *Le Serment du Jeu de Paume de Jacques-Louis David: Le Peintre, son milieu et son temps de 1789 à 1792*, (Paris, 1983) pp. 152-4.

almost grudging, one.⁸⁶ In the foreground of the *tableau* lies a mortally wounded lion, representing tyranny, his heart pierced by a broken pike, or, Doyen was undecided on the matter, by the royal *main de justice*. There can be little doubt as to how he might eventually have resolved this peculiarly self-imposed dilemma. One very obscure allusion to the *vainqueur* as a *Hercule Français* had already been crossed out in favour of a less contentious allegory representing 'Amour national' so it seems probable that the too-plebeian pike would sooner or later have ceded its place to the more elegant emblem of royal authority.⁸⁷ In this desperate attempt to repress all recollection of a traumatic year, Doyen not only banished the *vainqueur* from view; he denied his very existence. Having erased any trace of this too painful memory, Doyen had created the illusion, perhaps the ideal, of a Revolution without revolutionaries.

It would be easy to see Doyen's dismissal of the *vainqueur's* rôle in the Revolution as a reflection of his notorious snobbery, and doubtless, some degree of personal prejudice influenced this act of radical displacement, but the *Tableau* is much more than a mirror of the artist's personal elitism.⁸⁸ On the contrary, Doyen's design is representative precisely because it is scornful of the lower orders' sudden entry into politics, and because it contrives to obliterate all trace of that unexpected and unwanted appearance with a stubborn reassertion of royal magnificence. While few artists in 1790 went to quite these lengths to make the Revolution seem less threatening, most agreed with Doyen's basic strategy of portraying the Revolution as the bequest of a benevolent monarch. His contemporary, Nicolas-Guy Brenet, painted a similar scene set on the *autel de la patrie*, complete with an identical cast of allegorical figures.⁸⁹ Like Doyen, Brenet was one of the leading history painters of his generation. A regular recipient of prestigious royal commissions, he had established his name as a solid, if unimaginative, academic painter, but this lumbering work belies even this reputation. The composition is overcrowded and the figures wooden: Louis, in particular, seems peculiarly oblivious to the euphoria that

⁸⁶ Indeed, the parallels with the halcyon days of divine right monarchy go beyond the visual as Doyen compares the entire scene to 'la reconciliation de Dieu avec son peuple après le déluge', *ibid*.

⁸⁷ The manuscript's solitary reference to the *vainqueur* (in the rather oblique form of a *Hercule Français*) was crossed out by Doyen to be replaced by a figure representing *l'Amour national*.

⁸⁸ For Doyen's intransigent elitism, see M. Sandoz, *Gabriel-François Doyen, 1726-1806*, (Paris, 1975)

⁸⁹ Nicolas-Guy Brenet, *Louis XVI jure fidélité à la constitution sur l'autel de la patrie*, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Quimper.

surrounds him, and yet, however maladroit this piece may be, the king is, unmistakably, the focus of attention. Bathed in celestial light, and cast in the rôle of a slightly improbable Augustus, Louis' very detachment only serves to reinforce his transcendent authority. Like Doyen's never-executed *Tableau*, Brenet's *Louis XVI jure fidélité à la constitution* is an image of the monarch as imperial lawgiver, serenely bestowing the fruits of the new order upon an awe-struck populace, and like the *Tableau*, the representatives of that new order are little more than accessories to another apotheosis. Both Doyen and Brenet were nearing the end of their careers, but their conspicuous embarrassment when confronted with the events of 1789 cannot simply be dismissed as the conservatism of old men. That same year, Jean-Baptiste Regnault, one of the rising stars of the history genre, painted a virtually identical allegory of the Revolution in which an almost godlike Louis confers the Declaration of the Rights of Man upon a suitably appreciative France.⁹⁰ Regnault would, admittedly, find a more radical means of representing the Revolution with time, but for Doyen and Brenet's generation, this was not an option. The ungainly figures, the mannered style and contrived content of their works offer a truer reflection of the artistic elite's initial response to the Revolution than David's exhaustively studied *oeuvre* could ever provide. Far from embracing the new régime, these works testify to a profound nervousness on the part of a deeply conservative artistic establishment of which Diderot's earlier criticism still rang true: 'il n'y a que Dieu et le Roi.'⁹¹

If politics and the polite arts found common ground in 1790, it was in their collective resolve to wipe out the memory of the people in arms. In purely artistic terms, this anxiety is perhaps understandable. Little in the artist's strict training, or in the Academy's scrupulous division of genres, prepared him for the political or aesthetic problems raised by the Revolution. At its most basic level, the very immediacy of the Revolution was problematic for a generation that still considered the realistic depiction of current events in modern costume to be unworthy of the history painter's attention. The pioneering realism of Benjamin West's *Death of General Wolfe* had provoked some interest, but few imitators, among France's more conservative academic painters, who largely continued to look to the classics for edifying subject

⁹⁰ Jean-Baptiste Regnault, *Allégorie relative à la déclaration des droits de l'homme*, (1790) Musée Lambinet, Versailles.

⁹¹ Diderot, *Essai sur la Peinture*, (Paris, 1955 ed.) p. 90.

matter. Despite the blandishments offered by successive *Directeurs des Bâtiments* to encourage patriotic art, and even this was largely limited to a longing after the glories of the 17th century, the vogue for subjects selected from French national history proved short-lived, and the ascendancy of the antique was firmly re-established in the Salons of the early 1780's.⁹² As a result, French artists and aestheticians, unlike their British counterparts, struggled throughout the 1770's and 1780's to find an appropriate style with which to deal with contemporary subject matter. However, if the actuality of the Revolution proved difficult to reconcile with the academic training of the history painter, painting the Bastille also raised wider issues of propriety that seemed at odds with the moral vocation of this artistic elite. From mid-century onwards, critical opinion had turned steadily against the representation of armed conflict on canvas. The disorder of war, the sheer brutality of battle, was increasingly considered, as Prendergast suggests, 'incompatible with the 'dignity' that was supposed to characterise the elevated and elevating arts'.⁹³ The ferocious carnality of the battlefield had no place in the enlightened Salon, and by the same logic, military glory *per se* was increasingly dismissed as 'la fausse gloire des conquérans,' a bloody distortion of the pacific virtues of the legislator or the man of letters.⁹⁴ For enlightened public opinion, martial exploits were only redeemed, if at all, by other, more benign attributes, the philosophic reflection of La Harpe's *Catinat* or Thomas' *Comte de Saxe*, the persecuted integrity of Marmontel's *Bélisaire*, or the selfless patriotism of David's *Horatii*. By the mid-1760's, even the monarchy had joined in this chorus of disapproval, and royal monuments increasingly tended to emphasise the benevolent virtues of the paternal sovereign rather than the martial prowess of the conqueror. As Cochin explained:

'On a tant célébré les actions guerrières qui ne vont qu'à la destruction du genre humain; n'est-il pas raisonnable de représenter quelquefois les actions généreuses et pleines d'humanité qui chez les bons rois ont fait tant de bonheur.'⁹⁵

Notwithstanding a brief revival of interest in the wake of the American war, the battle scene, with one or two officially sponsored exceptions, had all but disappeared from the Salons of the 1780's.⁹⁶

⁹² For the details of royal patronage, see the appendix listing royal commissions included in J. A. Leith, 'Nationalism and the Fine Arts in France, 1750-1789' *S. V. E. C.* no. 189, (1972) pp. 919-37, pp. 935-7, for its decline, see Crow, *Painters and the Public Life*, pp. 191-8.

⁹³ C. Prendergast, *Napoleon and History Painting: Antoine-Jean Gros's La Bataille d'Eylau*, (Oxford, 1997) p. 89.

⁹⁴ Marmontel, 'Gloire', *Encyclopédie*, vol. vii, pp. 716-21, p. 718.

Violence, no matter how idealised, was no longer considered fitting subject matter for the artist living and working in polite society, and even the most *avant-garde* painters appear to have bowed to the public's newly acquired delicacy on this matter.⁹⁷ However, beyond these questions of artistic etiquette, the Bastille raised other problems of how to represent a new breed of hero, and once again, precedent militated against the memory of the *vainqueur*. The ordinary soldier had rarely, if ever, joined the ranks of the exalted in the imaginary pantheon of the academic eulogist or monumental architect. In his *Essai sur les Elogés*, Thomas reluctantly conceded that he displayed 'une sorte d'héroïsme inculte et sauvage', but he saw little to be admired in this almost bestial bravery, preferring instead the dashing young officer who combined:

la valeur et les arts,
Les palmes de Minerve, et les lauriers de Mars.⁹⁸

The Enlightenment's martial ideal was a socially exclusive one. While Thomas extolled the virtues of soldier-savants such as Jumonville, he completely ignored the sacrifices of the men he led, and few visual artists were any more sympathetic to the cannon fodder of contemporary warfare.⁹⁹ What was true of the common soldier was equally true of the common man. At best, the *homme du peuple* was relegated to the margins of the history painting, cast as an admiring witness to a greatness he could never share. More often however, he bore a more sinister aspect, appearing frequently as a member of the menacing rabble threatening the virtue of the aristocratic hero, as in Vincent's *Le Président Molé saisi par les factieux* or in

⁹⁵ Cited in J. Locquin, *La Peinture d'Histoire en France de 1747 à 1785*, p. 23.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 279.

⁹⁷ David's decision to efface the severed heads of Brutus's sons that he had originally intended to include in his *Brutus* is a case in point. The heads are clearly visible in preparatory sketches for the *Brutus*, but they had disappeared by the time of its exhibition in August 1789, by which time, of course, the sight of heads on pikes had acquired a rather unsavoury immediacy. R. Herbert, *David, Voltaire, Brutus and the French Revolution: an essay in art and politics*, (London, 1972) p. 51.

⁹⁸ Thomas, *Essai sur les Éloges*, in Thomas, *Œuvres*, (Paris, 1819 ed.) vol. i, p. 225, and *Jumonville, poème par M. Thomas...*, (Paris, 1759) B. N. YE-33897, p. 17. In this respect, David Bell somewhat overstates the case for the democratisation of the arts during the ancien régime in arguing that the eponymous hero of Thomas' epic poem *Jumonville* represents 'the direct predecessor' of the Revolution's military heroes. The first casualty of the Seven Years' War may not have been another Turenne, but even so, Joseph Coulon de Jumonville was every inch the enlightened ideal of an officer and a gentleman. 'Éclairé, Prudent avec grandeur, et ferme avec sagesse', Jumonville's virtues were those of the Academy rather than the *levée en masse*. D. A. Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France: Inventing Nationalism, 1680-1800*, (Cambridge, Mass, 2001) p. 103.

Suvée's *l'Admiral de Coligny en impose à ses assassins*. Yet, whether assigned the rôle of passive observer or shadowy assassin, the common man remained a peripheral presence in the workings of the history genre, and perhaps inevitably, the *vainqueur* inherited this mantle of artistic disdain. For the self-respecting history painter, accustomed to painting noble subjects for equally noble patrons, the shabby anonymity of the *vainqueur* made an unlikely, not to say unsavoury, *exemplum virtutis*. As if the veteran's social origins were not bad enough, his actions lacked the exemplary clarity that defined the 'significant moment' of the history genre.¹⁰⁰ Few could have denied the daring of the men who led the assault on the Bastille, but theirs was a strange kind of valour; a cruel, vengeful, courage that could make few claims to the epic dignity or moral integrity that were the stock in trade of the history painter. For a genre dedicated to transcending the petty details of sordid reality in search of a higher truth, a *beau idéal*, the *vainqueur* was easily dismissed as merely *anecdotique*. For Doyen and his kind, the real meaning of the Revolution had to lie elsewhere, in the King's appearance in the *Salle des Menus Plaisirs* or the solemn oaths sworn on the *Champ de Mars*.

In the Academy, representation did not mean reportage, and so, it fell to artists on the margins of academic respectability to attempt to describe the indescribable. As a result, painting the Bastille was left to a variety of genre painters and portraitists such as Antoine Vestier; but chiefly, it became the preserve of landscape painters like Hubert Robert, Jean-Pierre Houel, or Jean-Baptiste Lallemand and a host of other unknowns, the anonymous drudges of a lesser genre. This was a reasonable conclusion perhaps, given the nature of the scene, but the landscape artists' virtual monopoly on painting the Bastille also reflects the reluctance of other, more distinguished artists to engage with such a difficult subject. Less was expected of landscape painters, their duty was to describe, not to dignify, but even so, most resolved the difficulties inherent in painting the Revolution by portraying the aftermath of the siege rather than the battle itself and the slaughter that this necessarily involved. This choice is particularly clear in the abundance of paintings

⁹⁹ Jean-Simon Berthélemy's *Reprise de Paris sur les Anglais par les troupes de Charles VII* (1787) is an exception, but for the most part, history painters and monumental architects such as Boullée ignored the existence of the common foot-soldier in favour of his more cultured commander.

¹⁰⁰ On the rôle of the 'significant moment' in eighteenth century French art, see F. H. Dowley, 'D'Angiviller's *Grands Hommes* and the Significant Moment', *Art Bulletin*, no. 39, (1959) pp. 259-77.

and engravings depicting the release of the Bastille's prisoners or, more particularly, the razing of the citadel that began immediately after the siege. A few, like Lallemand, did paint the actual battle, but the majority did not, and opted instead to depict this momentous act of demolition rather than paint the events that had made it possible. Certainly, these scenes of jubilant destruction and liberation were profoundly expressive, but they also suggest a widespread desire to banish the memory of violence in favour of the more congenial scenes that followed.

There was, then, no easy way to represent the *vainqueurs*, and few academic artists ever attempted the feat. In the world beyond the rue Saint-Jacques, the *faubourgs'* rôle in the July Revolution remained a taboo subject, and this enduring aversion is unmistakable in the parade of artistic priorities that was the Salon of 1791. Most artists that August respectfully ignored the Revolution, but even among the minority who did submit political works only a handful dared confront the events of July 14th, and once again, these were largely allegorical studies.¹⁰¹ Allegory set the tone of the Salon's response to the Revolution, but the artistic community was not so obsessed with abstraction as to forego the increasingly profitable market in portraits of prominent deputies and *philosophes*, and for all its supposed shortcomings as a political event, the 1791 Salon was awash with Revolutionary portraits.¹⁰² Adélaïde Labille-Guiard exhibited fourteen such works, Joseph Boze three; Houdon furnished six busts and Caffiéri another three, while dozens of artists submitted solitary portraits, each one celebrating the solemn self-confidence of the Revolutionary bourgeoisie. By comparison, the *vainqueurs* were the forgotten men of the Salon. Only one entry specifically dared recall their memory, Foureau's model for a monument in their honour, but this solitary exhibit was more than swamped by the dozens of portraits of Bailly, Robespierre, Mirabeau, and their respectable kind.¹⁰³ In 1791, even George Washington proved a more popular subject than the *vainqueur*. As the great and the good gathered in the Louvre that autumn, one conclusion was clear: both painters and their public preferred less questionable heroes than the *faubourgs* could ever hope to offer.

¹⁰¹ On the representation of the Revolution in the 1791 Salon, see Leith, *The Idea of Art as Propaganda*, p. 101, and A. Jourdan, *Les Monuments de la Révolution*, pp. 443-6.

¹⁰² On the rise of the deputy portrait, see W. Olander, *Pour Transmettre à la Postérité, French Painting and Revolution: 1774-1795*, unpublished PhD thesis, (N. Y. U., 1983)

¹⁰³ Foureau, *Sarcophage aux vainqueurs*, B. N. Estampes, coll. de Hennin, no. 10358.

Representing the events of 1789 was obviously a daunting task, but for all their prevarication before the spectacle of Revolution, the painters and planners of 1789 and 1790 were astonishingly unambiguous on one point: their repudiation of the *vainqueur* as an acceptable icon for the new dispensation. While many looked to the rubble of the Bastille to furnish the setting for their paintings or the stones for their monuments, it was only to super-impose a less threatening ideal upon the too vivid memory of the victorious rabble. In July 1789, Mounier's first instinct had been to erect a monument to the king on the site; and he was not alone in this attempt to colonise the symbolic space liberated on the 14th. Both Mirabeau and Barère sensed the same need to fill the vacuum left by Palloy's workmen in the name of the new order. For the Tribune, the site would furnish an ideal location for a new National Assembly, while Barère suggested the erection of an obelisk, built with the stones of the citadel, and engraved with the Declaration of the Rights of Man.¹⁰⁴ Numerous plans followed, but none ever bore fruit. Money, as ever, was scarce, and the Constituent Assembly had more pressing problems to deal with, but despite their differences, these designs shared a common goal, a goal that transcended factional divisions within the Manège. From conservatives such as Mounier to radicals like Barère, it mattered little whether the image of the king or the deputies, or better yet, an opaque abstraction finally replaced the Bastille, as long as the people were written out of the symbolic equation. Throughout 1790, the deputies' desire to commemorate this space was marked by mixed emotions, a strange combination of gregarious triumph and silent shame. Above all, however, their plans for the *place de la Bastille* were inspired by an overwhelming desire to deliver the Revolution from the terrible ignominy of its inception. These endless plans, well intentioned but depressingly monotonous, were just so many variations on a theme. They all speak of the fear of respectable men, as if raising a statue to Louis or to *Liberté* might somehow exorcise the memory of the people in arms, or atone for the bloody nativity at the Bastille.

The alternative to the Bastille was the void, and by the summer of 1790, the renamed *Champ de la Fédération* had become the new spiritual centre of the Revolutionary universe. Consecrated with the festival of federation, this vast, empty expanse

¹⁰⁴ *Lettres du Comte Mirabeau à ses commettants*, no. 19, cited in G. Walter, *La Révolution Française vue par ses journaux*, (Paris, 1948) pp. 24-5, and A. M. no. 195, 14 July 1790, p. 115.

signified a new beginning, a space upon which the new régime could build an image in its own likeness, unencumbered by the ambiguities that enveloped the Bastille. An entire city stood between the *autel de la patrie* and the old fortress, drowning out the jarring echoes of battle that still reverberated from the ruined citadel. And yet, despite this safe distance, a sense of unease still permeated the great festival of federation on 14 July 1790. An anniversary that denies its own *raison d'être* must inevitably be a little awkward, and allusions to the Bastille were conspicuous by their absence on the Champ de Mars. They scarcely figured in the provinces either. Here and there, the *vainqueurs* were honoured, as in Saint-Maur where, in the absence of a Jacobin club to orchestrate events in a more seemly manner, the peasantry cheerfully re-enacted the capture of the Bastille by storming a cardboard fortress and ripping apart a stuffed dummy of de Launay, or mourned with funeral services for the 'morts de la Bastille.'¹⁰⁵ But for the most part, this was woman's work: a sentimental indulgence for the *citoyennes* who led the way in organising these memorials while their menfolk busied themselves with straightening their uniforms and rehearsing their civic oaths. The wave of federations that swept across France in the summer of 1790 has long been romanticised as an 'éruption poétique', but it was a carefully choreographed eruption, and the dominant theme was not liberty, but the celebration of a new found, and still precarious, rule of law.¹⁰⁶ These festivals were born out of fear, a fear spawned by burning *châteaux* and rioting mobs, a fear scarcely tranquillised by the massed ranks of National Guards and the carefully synchronised solemnity of their oath to Nation, Law and King. The federations of 1790, especially the great Parisian fête, were remembered as a glorious spectacle. They marked the spontaneous union of Frenchmen from every corner of the kingdom under the sign of the 'cheval blanc', but in reality, relief was the order of the day.

How different to the shabby little ceremony that took place a week later in Paris, when a small band of women, children, and cripples gathered on the ruins of the Bastille to remember their own particular anniversary, and to say a few prayers for

¹⁰⁵ For Saint-Maur's very literal anniversary celebrations, see M. Dommanget, 'Le symbolisme et le prosélytisme révolutionnaire à Beauvais et dans l'Oise,' *A. H. R. F.* vol. iv, (1927) pp. 127-34, pp. 133-4. Elsewhere, the Jacobins of both Mâcon and Aix held memorial masses for the *vainqueurs*, but generally, these services were organised by women. M. Kennedy, *The Jacobin Clubs in the French Revolution*, vol. i, (Princeton, 1982) p. 48.

¹⁰⁶ Michelet, *Histoire de la Révolution Française*, vol. i, p. 411. For a convincing discussion of the 'caractère défensif' of the federations, see M. Ozouf, *La Fête Révolutionnaire*, p. 76.

their loved ones. To be sure of a decent attendance, the *vainqueurs* had postponed their anniversary mass until after the Federation, but to no avail. Beyond the widows and the walking wounded, only a few stray *fédérés*, still hanging around after the 14th, joined them to hear Mass for the fallen, and to listen to yet more speeches. Nobody came from the Commune, nobody came from the Assembly: even the *fédérés* were probably there only out of curiosity.¹⁰⁷

Loustallot was outraged by the authorities' display of 'perfidie indifférence' towards the memory of the dead, but the *vainqueurs* remained undaunted.¹⁰⁸ Convinced that their anniversary mass had gone unnoticed because of the excitement surrounding the Federation, they stoically set about organising another service, and issuing another batch of invitations. On Sunday, August 1st, posters appeared all over Paris announcing that Fauchet would deliver the eulogy at a 'service solennel' in Notre Dame, and this time, there would be no confusion. A copy of this poster was addressed to the President of the National Assembly inviting him, 'selon son louable usage', to send a delegation to the ceremony.¹⁰⁹ But there had been no mistake on the 22nd, and when Robespierre raised the invitation in the Assembly, he came up against a brick wall. On the pretext that the deputies could not become involved in the admittedly genuine tensions between the National Guards and the *vainqueurs*, the heavyweight combination of Barnave, Duport and the Lameths carried the day and Robespierre's motion to send a delegation to the service was unceremoniously shelved.¹¹⁰ Sensing which way the wind was blowing, Bailly quietly wrote to the cathedral chapter suggesting that the ceremony be 'remis à un autre temps.'¹¹¹ The canons took the hint, and the anniversary mass never took place. Already on June 25, the mayor had badgered the veterans into renouncing the uniforms and engraved sabres they had been awarded the week before, and a month later, his intervention again proved decisive.¹¹² With Bailly's note to the cathedral chapter, the officially endorsed celebration of the *vainqueurs*' sacrifice came to an abrupt end. For once, Marat suspended his usual state of incandescent fury and resorted to irony to describe

¹⁰⁷ *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 54, 24 juillet 1790, p. 60.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* p. 61.

¹⁰⁹ *Avis aux Bons Patriotes*. A. N. C44, no. 398.

¹¹⁰ *A. M.*, no. 214, 2 August 1790, pp. 283-4.

¹¹¹ Lacroix, *Actes de la Commune*, vol. vii, pp. 465-6.

the 'surseoir' of the ceremony, but by this time he had almost as much sympathy for Hulin's opportunistic management of the veterans' cause as he had for the triumvirs.¹¹³ It was a sorry end to the commemoration of these 'martyrs immortels du patriotisme et de la liberté', but the Assembly had decided that the blood of patriots was best forgotten, and where the Assembly led, most right-thinking Revolutionaries unhesitatingly followed.¹¹⁴

In July 1789, Rivarol had forecast: 'le temps viendra, et ce temps n'est pas loin, que l'Assemblée nationale dira à l'Armée civile: *vous m'avez sauvée de l'autorité, mais qui me sauvera de vous?*'¹¹⁵ A year later, his prediction rang startlingly true. As 1790 wore on and the Revolution seemed to settle into a civilised parliamentary routine, the deputies had grown increasingly uncomfortable with the reminder: 'vous-mêmes vous avez de sauveurs.' While the *faubourgs* continued to cherish the memory of the *vainqueurs*, flocking to their funerals and buying their portraits in the rue St. Jacques, the authorities resolved to abandon them, spurning their invitation and stymieing their last sorry attempt to remember their dead. By the end of the year, the *Vainqueurs* had been officially wound up, formally dissolved at the behest of the Commune, the victims of relentless jealousy and suspicion.¹¹⁶ Under the circumstances, it is difficult to agree with Lüsebrink and Reichardt that 1790 witnessed the 'stabilisation de la champ sémantique "Bastille"'.¹¹⁷ The reservations that had bothered Romme and Ferrières in the summer of 1789 never ceased to tarnish the memory of the *vainqueurs*, and the question of how to commemorate the Revolution only served to crystallise these misgivings. Doyen, Mounier and the festivities on the Champ de Mars had, each in their own way, struggled to erase these painful memories in the name of the Assembly's fragile covenant with the Crown, but this could only ever be accomplished at the expense of the *vainqueur*. Unloved and uncelebrated, there was no place for his memory either on the monuments or in the

¹¹² For this self-denying 'démarche', see the *Procès-verbal de ce qui s'est passé dans l'assemblée des vainqueurs de la Bastille, tenue avant-hier aux Quinze-vingt, et de la députation à l'Assemblée nationale, à M. de la Fayette, à l'Hôtel-de-Ville...*, (Paris, 1790) p. 6.

¹¹³ *L'Ami du Peuple*, no. 185, 8 August 1790, p. 4.

¹¹⁴ Osselin, *Discours funèbre prononcé par M. Osselin...*, p. 5.

¹¹⁵ *Journal Politique-National*, no. 9, 30 July 1789, p. 5.

¹¹⁶ After months of mounting controversy, the Commune finally forbade any further assemblies by the *Vainqueurs* on the 28th of December 1790. Lacroix, *Actes de la Commune*, 2e Série, vol. i, pp. 630-8.

¹¹⁷ H.-J. Lüsebrink and R. Reichardt, 'La "Bastille" dans l'imaginaire social de la France à la fin du XVIIIe Siècle (1774-1799)', *R. H. M. C.* (1983) pp. 196-234, p. 200.

rituals of the regenerated France. A new trinity, the Nation, the Law, and the King, had presented itself to the people on that famously rain-soaked anniversary on the Champ de Mars, and proclaimed a happy ending to the Revolutionary adventure. With Lafayette and his National Guards at the heart of the festivities, the Assembly formally declared an end to the chaos and the bloodshed. Upstanding, clean-cut, young men from well-regarded families, these were the new heroes of the Revolution. In comparison with the scruffy, threatening rabble that had died a year before, this was a much more respectable portrait of the Revolutionary family.

The federation's promise of a happy ending to the Revolution cast a powerful spell, but scarcely six weeks later, Carra confessed that '*la charme est rompu*.'¹¹⁸ Just two months after the jubilant scenes on the Champ des Mars, another crowd gathered at the *autel de la patrie* to see another great pageant featuring Lafayette and his National Guards, but in September 1790, the crowds came to mourn, not to rejoice. As Paris prepared to honour the Guardsmen who had died in Nancy '*pour le rétablissement de l'ordre*, the commemoration of the Revolutionary dead began to assume a more contentious aspect.¹¹⁹

The Revolution did not come to a polite stop on the field of the Federation and the bloodshed did not cease in the summer of 1790. On the contrary, lawlessness remained widespread throughout the summer and violence continued to erupt across the countryside with alarming regularity. While the exceptionally well-policed Paris was spared any open conflict, the provinces presented an altogether less harmonious prospect. The revival of long-dormant regional rivalries, mounting peasant discontent with the sudden reappearance of feudalism in the guise of redemption payments, and the outbreak of a sectarian *jacquerie* in the south all contributed to a mood of mounting anxiety in Paris, but most worrying of all was the state of the army. As Scott has suggested, '1790 was a year of disintegration' for the army.¹²⁰ The emigration *en masse* of the officer corps was beginning to gather momentum, but in

¹¹⁸ *Annales Patriotiques et Littéraires*, 3 September 1790.

¹¹⁹ *A. M.*, no. 261, 18 September 1790, p. 672.

reality, this was the least of the Assembly's concerns. Indiscipline and desertion were rife. Rival regiments fought in the streets of Lille and the Touraine infantry ran riot in Perpignan, but it was in Nancy that a problem finally became a crisis, and it was here that the Assembly resolved to make a stand.

The issue in Nancy, as elsewhere, was money. Unpaid since the spring, the Swiss troops of the Châteaueux regiment finally revolted in August, locking up their officers and redistributing the regimental funds. It was not the first time that the regiment had mutinied. It had been the first to refuse to fire on the Parisian crowd in July 1789, but a year later, the Assembly was in no mood for nostalgia, and on 16 August, it decided to make an example of the disorderly Swiss. Despite receiving word from Nancy that 'tout est rentré dans l'ordre ici,' the deputies dispatched General Bouillé to restore discipline.¹²¹ By the time he arrived outside Nancy on 31 August, at the head of five thousand troops and National Guards, the situation inside the town had deteriorated once again into open mutiny. Bouillé immediately demanded an unconditional surrender, and the evacuation of the Châteaueux soldiers. This was accepted, but in the confusion that followed, fighting broke out, and a pitched battle ensued. By nightfall, the situation had been brought under control, but Bouillé had lost over two hundred men, and he exacted a heavy price from the Swiss. Twenty-two soldiers went to the scaffold, one was broken on the wheel, and another forty-one were dispatched to the galleys in chains. Nancy also suffered for supposedly encouraging the mutineers; the city was effectively placed under martial law, its Jacobin club shut down and National Guards disbanded.

As far as the Assembly was concerned, the boil had been lanced, and the Paris Jacobins seemed in broad agreement. The club expressed its regret that blood had been shed, and urged compromise in any future conflicts between officers and men, but it sternly reminded the latter that 'chaque état impose des devoirs... qu'il ne peut point exister d'armée sans discipline et le discipline sans obéissance.'¹²² The *Société de 1789* was even more emphatic, and launched a scathing attack on the 'brigands

¹²⁰ S. F. Scott, 'Problems of Law and Order during 1790, the "Peaceful" year of the French Revolution', *A. H. R.*, lxxx, (1975) pp.859-88, p. 863.

¹²¹ *A. M.*, no. 238, 26 August 1790, p. 478.

¹²² *Adresse de la Société des Amis de la Constitution de Paris aux sociétés qui lui sont affiliées, le 10 septembre 1790*, in Aulard, *Jacobins*, vol. i, p. 285.

avides' and 'barbares hostilement armés' of the Swiss regiment.¹²³ Respectable political opinion was clearly outraged by the mutiny and accepted its repression as an unfortunate necessity, but reaction on the streets was quite another matter. When news of events in Nancy reached the capital late on 2 September, an angry crowd descended on the Manège in protest against the massacre. Demanding the dismissal of the ministers involved and the prosecution of Bouillé, the demonstrators invaded the Assembly itself and were only dispersed by the arrival of a detachment of armed Guardsmen.¹²⁴ Public opinion, or at least a very vocal section of it, was evidently less than convinced by the deputies' version of events, and the radical press, predictably led by Marat, set to work on exploiting this breach in the Assembly's defences. Dark rumours of a *noir* plot fuelled the public disquiet, but surprisingly, this threatening outbreak did not unduly upset the deputies.¹²⁵ The presence of cannon on the steps of the Assembly had a very reassuring effect, and after a cursory debate the next day, they voted their thanks to Bouillé and his men 'pour le rétablissement de l'ordre.'¹²⁶

Nevertheless, a crowd of between twenty and thirty thousand was not to be ignored, especially when cries of 'à la lanterne' had been heard, and Lafayette immediately convened a meeting of his sixty Guards battalions to endorse the official version of events with another vote of thanks to Bouillé.¹²⁷ The gathering in the Hôtel de Ville did not take much persuading.¹²⁸ There were a few dissenting voices. The Cordeliers battalion felt that 'nous ne pouvons manifester d'autre sentiment que celui de la douleur' while the Val-de-Grâce guards refused point blank to condone 'l'erreur qui a fait couler le sang des Français par la main de Français', but one by one, all the other battalions fell into line.¹²⁹ In one address after another, they voted their approval of the handling of affairs at Nancy, but more particularly, they reaffirmed 'les véritables

¹²³ 'Adresse de la Société de 1789 au sujet des événements de Nancy', *Journal de la Société de 1789*, no. 15, 15 September 1790.

¹²⁴ A. M., no. 247, 4 September 1790, p. 551, *Chronique de Paris*, no. 246, 3 September 1790, p. 982, and the *Ami du Peuple*, no. 213, 6 September 1790, pp. 9-10.

¹²⁵ According to Marat, the massacre at Nancy was no more than the prelude to a wider conspiracy to 'égorger le monde.' *L'Ami du Peuple*, no. 213, 6 September, p. 4.

¹²⁶ A. M., no. 248, 5 September 1789, p. 559.

¹²⁷ *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 43, p. 164, and the *Chronique de Paris*, no. 246, 3 September 1790, p. 982. For the size of the crowd, see A. P. vol. xviii, p. 511.

¹²⁸ Lacroix, *Actes de la Commune*, vol. vii, p. 158.

¹²⁹ The Cordelier battalion's sentiments were reprinted in *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 43, pp. 176-178, while the Val-de-Grâce's address was published in the *Ami du peuple*, no. 222, 15 September 1790, pp. 2-4.

sentiments qui les animent toutes pour leurs chef.'¹³⁰ At first glance, these insistent expressions of respect for Lafayette seem out of place, a distraction from the bloody events on the frontier, but in reality, Lafayette had very quickly come to occupy centre stage in the affair. For the radicals stirring up the rumpus, Bouillé may have been the immediate villain of the piece, but behind him stood his cousin, the marquis de Lafayette, and he was their real target.

The left's animosity was not misplaced, for Lafayette had been to the fore in advocating firm measures in Nancy. In early August, he had written 'non pas officiellement mais fraternellement' to Bouillé to inform his 'cher cousin' that 'nous devons frapper un coup imposant pour toute l'armée et arrêter par un exemple sévère le débandement général qui se prépare.'¹³¹ The execution and imprisonment of the Swiss undoubtedly furnished the 'exemple sévère' that Lafayette required, and yet, however shocking this 'coup imposant' was, there were wider issues at stake in the polemic that ensued. As Lefebvre remarked, 1790 was 'the year of Lafayette.'¹³² Centre-stage at the Federation, he remained in remarkably good standing with the majority of deputies throughout the summer, but for Parisian radicals, his stock had fallen with astonishing speed since the heady days when he was hailed as 'the hero of two worlds.'¹³³ If Marat was particularly venomous concerning 'Général Motier', the rest of the radical press was no less suspicious of his motives, and rumours of Caesarism now dogged his every step, as both he and his Guardsmen seemed to embody the 'bourgeois aristocracy' that had come to dominate Paris politics since the summer of 1789. Nancy threw these charges into sharp relief, and the radical offensive that followed provoked an instinctive response from the Guards. Outraged by 'des bruits qui circulent depuis quelques jours dans la capitale', they enveloped their commander in a protecting veil of congratulatory addresses and promises to march 'avec confiance sous les ordres de son Général.'¹³⁴ The Guards and the civic order they stood for were clearly rattled by the radical onslaught, and hoped that a resounding show of unity would lay the matter to rest.

¹³⁰ 'Adresse de l'Assemblée Générale des députés de l'armée nationale parisienne, séante à l'Hôtel de Ville, du mercredi, 8 septembre 1790', reprinted in Lacroix, *Actes de la Commune*, vol. vii, p. 163.

¹³¹ F.-C.-A. Bouillé, *Mémoires sur la Révolution française*, 2 vols. (London, 1797 ed.) vol. i, p. 147.

¹³² G. Lefebvre, *The French Revolution*, (Columbia, 1962) vol. i, p. 136.

¹³³ See for example, Ferrière's comments in his *Correspondance Inédite*, (Paris, 1932) p. 237.

It did not. The *bruits* and the *murmures* continued. Fréron soon added his voice to the clamour, denouncing 'le sanguinaire Mottier, ami et parent du sanguinaire Bouillé', while Marat continued to pile on the pressure, condemning the 'honteux asservissement de l'armée parisienne'.¹³⁵ Within days, he had published a *Relation authentique de ce qui s'est passé à Nancy* which singled out 'le perfide Motier' as the real author of the massacre.¹³⁶ Other broadsides quickly followed. One pamphleteer claimed that Lafayette planned to usurp the throne with the aid of his uniformed 'janissaires,' and gave thanks that the likes of Robespierre stood between the people and the malevolent designs of 'ce Cromwell.'¹³⁷ Others were even less reserved. One anonymous author denounced Lafayette as a 'sacre jean-foutre qui ne mérite que la corde' while another warned 'mon Général' that

'le peuple commence à s'armer contre vous, et parait me faire croire que votre tête pourrait bien lui servir d'amusement comme celles des Berthier, des Foulons, des Flesselles.'¹³⁸

Things were clearly getting out of hand; an acceptable level of debate was one thing, but talk of lynchings and threats of popular violence were a much more serious matter. Well-meaning addresses, such as that announcing the readiness of the Guards to 'verser son sang pour le maintien de l'ordre constitutionnel' only went so far in persuading public opinion, but nothing could match a well-organised show of force.¹³⁹

The Assembly's decision to hold a festival in honour of the 'citoyens morts le 31 août à Nancy, pour le rétablissement de l'ordre et de la subordination' cannot be divorced from this ever more threatening atmosphere.¹⁴⁰ A fortnight of increasingly anxious addresses had done nothing to stem the mounting controversy, and so, on 16 September, the authorities finally decided to act. In proposing the ceremony to the National Assembly, Bailly's speech made all the right noises about awarding 'les honneurs funèbres à ces généreuses guerriers', but the key word in his address was 'subordination' and this priority was more than evident in the spectacle that took

¹³⁴ *Délibération du bataillon de Saint-Séverin*..., A. P., vol. xix, p.20.

¹³⁵ *L'Orateur du Peuple*, no. 27, p 211, and *L'Ami du peuple*, no. 222, 15 September 1790, p. 1.

¹³⁶ 'Relation authentique de ce qui s'est passé à Nancy', in Marat, *Œuvres Politiques*, vol. iii, p. 1450.

¹³⁷ Anon. *Le Cheval Blanc et les frères bleus*, (s.l., s.d.) B. N. Lb39/9397, p. 3.

¹³⁸ Anon. *Ah, Qu'ils sont bêtes, les Gardes Nationales: Dialogue entre un cocher de fiacre et un charretier du Quai de la Tournelle*, (s.l., s.d.) B. N. Lb39/4167a, p. 4, and Anon. *Les Bassesses de l'Armée Bleue et conduite abominable du Général Lafayette dédiées à lui-même par un de ses soldats*, no. II, B. N. Lb39/9398, p. 1.

¹³⁹ *Adresse de la Garde Nationale parisienne aux Gardes Nationales qui ont concouru au rétablissement de l'ordre à Nancy*, (11 septembre 1790) see Marat's reaction on the 13th in the *Ami du Peuple*, no. 220, 13 September 1790, p. 7.

place on the Champ de Mars on 20 September.¹⁴¹ In many respects, the staging of this 'service funèbre' closely resembled that of the federation two months earlier. The same blend of secular and sacred in both ritual and personnel was evident on both occasions, the same cast of deputies and uniformed Guardsmen were in attendance, and once again, Lafayette was the centre of attention. Admittedly, things were done on a smaller scale in September, and to a tighter budget.¹⁴² Instead of the two hundred concelebrants who had served Talleyrand in July, just sixty priests were on hand to assist the *abbé* Saint-Martin, and the numbers of Guardsmen had also diminished.¹⁴³ The provincial delegates had also disappeared, but then, this was largely Parisian business.

The superficial similarities between the two festivals were marked, but as Heurtault-Lamerville reported to the National Assembly, the two days could not have been more different: 'l'un présentait le tableau de la joie du cœur la plus exaltée, l'autre l'affliction fraternelle, qui ne sait que sentir et pleurer.'¹⁴⁴ The *autel de la patrie* had been transformed to suit the occasion. Black crepe draped the altar and surrounding galleries, a cypress stood at each corner of the podium, four huge funerary torches belched out great clouds of perfumed smoke, and the clergy and Guardsmen all wore mourning.¹⁴⁵ On the altar, a sarcophagus had been raised, bearing inscriptions honouring the sacrifice of the 'braves guerriers morts à Nancy pour la défense de la loi' and celebrating their eternal glory. Even the most antagonistic witnesses conceded that it was an impressive display: Marat admitted as much, although only as a prelude to condemning 'des sommes prodiguées pour cette vaine pompe, dans un temps où règne la plus profonde misère.'¹⁴⁶ As a spectacle, it was undoubtedly a

¹⁴⁰ A. M., no. 261, 18 September 1790, p. 672.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Desmoulins put the cost of the September festival at a modest 'deux milles écus.' *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 44, p. 213. The final bill for the Federation was an altogether more impressive 900,000 livres, A. N. F/13/204/1624.

¹⁴³ *Détail du service funèbre qui sera célébré par la Garde Nationale Parisienne, le lundi 20 septembre 1790, dans le Champ de la Fédération, en mémoire de nos frères d'armes morts à Nancy pour l'exécution de la Loi...*, (s.l., s.d.) B. N. Lb39/4007.

¹⁴⁴ A. P., 21 September 1790, vol. xix, p. 108.

¹⁴⁵ The following account is compiled from the descriptions of the festival in the *Annales Patriotiques et Littéraires*, 26 September 1790, p. 456, *Chronique de Paris*, no. 216, 21 September 1790, p. 1054, *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 44, pp. 210-213, the *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 63, 25 September 1790, pp. 530 ff, and the anon. *La Triste Journée, ou Petite pièces du champs de Mars, suivi du grand convoi du fameux Loustalot, de son oraison funèbre et du petit mot d'un sans-souci au terrible Lameth*, (Paris, 1790)

¹⁴⁶ *L'Ami du Peuple*, no. 228, 22 September 1790, p. 1.

success. The authorities had honoured their own in style, with an extravagance that mocked the memory of the *vainqueur*. In contrast to the shambles of 22 July, this was all very 'imposant,' all very 'du goût.'¹⁴⁷

Among the dedications on the sarcophagus was one that summed up the whole purpose of the festival: 'ennemis de la patrie, tremblez, ils laissent leur exemple.'¹⁴⁸ If the exact identity of these enemies was left open to the imagination, the other side of the equation, 'leur exemple' was right there, sixty battalions of them, to receive the lesson. However, the impression one gets from all of the contemporary engravings of the festival is that these neatly arranged ranks of Guardsmen were the only ones there, while all of the written reports, even the most hostile, suggest that a large crowd had assembled to see the parade. The contrast between these accounts is instructive: the people had gathered to see the spectacle, but they were herded away at one remove from the action. Saint-Martin's oration must certainly have been inaudible, but whatever Saint-Martin had to say, and no-one really bothered to report his speech, this was not the point of the ceremony. Whereas the Federation had spilled over into a weeklong spree of dancing and fireworks, a carnival where everyone mixed pell-mell, a scrupulously maintained space had now opened up between spectators and Guardsmen, between the people and the law.¹⁴⁹ From a distance, the public would be all the better able to appreciate the solemnity of the occasion: the discipline of the forces of law and order, the dignity of Lafayette entering alone on his white charger. The Federation had produced 'a general feeling of exhilaration and joy,' among those who took part, but one did not take part on 20 September, one beheld the majesty of the Law, and one was overwhelmed.¹⁵⁰

The effect was, as Heurtault suggested, 'puissant sur l'âme', and many witnesses agreed that 'un silence et un repos universel' seemed to dominate proceedings.¹⁵¹ This was doubtless as it should be, but it was probably preaching to the converted, and even they seemed ill at ease with the ceremony. In the moderate press, the unrestrained raptures that had greeted the Federation a few months before were

¹⁴⁷ *Chronique de Paris*, no. 216, 21 September 1790, p. 1054, and *La Triste Journée...* p. 21.

¹⁴⁸ *A. P.*, vol. xix, p. 108.

¹⁴⁹ *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 54, 24 July 1790, pp. 55 ff.

¹⁵⁰ Maupetit, cited in Tackett, *Becoming a Revolutionary*, p. 301.

¹⁵¹ *A. P.*, vol. xix, p. 108 and *Annales Patriotiques et Littéraires*, 26 September 1790, p. 456.

replaced by an awkward, even slightly embarrassed, reticence when it came to reporting its successor on the Champ de Mars, and few radical journalists were won over by the Guards' display.¹⁵² Reflecting on the ceremony a few days later, Desmoulins contrasted the sincere grief of the hundred or so mourners who had recently followed Loustalot to the grave with the empty pomposity of the Guards' parade, while Marat bluntly dismissed the entire affair as a 'farce politique.'¹⁵³ Nor did the pageantry succeed in stemming the flow of pamphlets attacking Lafayette. On the contrary, it merely furnished the occasion for a fresh crop of them.¹⁵⁴

If the festival on the 20th failed to silence the left, and realistically, this was never likely, was it any more successful in imposing the official account of Nancy as a triumph of legitimate authority rather than the massacre described by radicals? The crowd that gathered on the 20th seem to have showed little inclination for the spectacle on the Champ de Mars where even Lafayette's appearance failed to arouse any real enthusiasm: 'pas un applaudissement, toutes les bouches étaient muettes, toutes les mains immobiles.'¹⁵⁵ A few similar ceremonies were held in the provinces, but the handful of addresses that reached the Assembly suggests that few hearts were really in the deputies' imperious version of events,¹⁵⁶ while the public's short-lived interest in the chevalier Desilles, who died trying to come between the combatants in Nancy, suggests a similar degree of disenchantment with the official line.¹⁵⁷ Even a moderate like Mercier would look back on the Assembly's handling of the whole

¹⁵² Press reports favourable to the ceremony tended to be extremely short, and confined themselves largely to simple description. See, for example, the account in the *Chronique de Paris*, no. 216, 21 September 1790, p. 1054.

¹⁵³ *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 44, p. 213, and *L'Ami du Peuple*, no. 228, 22 September 1790, p. 1.

¹⁵⁴ See for example *Le Cheval blanc et ses frères bleus*, (s.l., s.d.) B. N. Lb39/9397, and *Oraison funèbre prononcée par le cheval blanc du ci-devant M. de Lafayette au Champ fédératif, en l'honneur des assassins du régiment de Châteaueux et des patriotes de Nancy*, (s.l., s.d.) B. N. Lb39/9396

¹⁵⁵ *L'Orateur du Peuple*, no. xli, p. 327.

¹⁵⁶ Memorial services in honour of the Guards who died at Nancy were staged spasmodically across the provinces, in, for example, Artonne on the 27th of September, in Vire in the Calvados, and at Tulle on the 5th of October, but these services were not particularly widespread, and they do not seem to have attracted much public attention. F. Martin, ed. *Les Jacobins au Village*, (Clermont-Ferrand, 1902) p. 15, A. M., no. 264, 21 September 1790, and the *Chronique de Paris*, no. 263, 20 September, p. 1051, and V. Forot, *Les Fêtes Nationales et cérémonies publique à Tulle sous la Révolution et la premier République*, (Brive, 1904) pp. 34-43.

¹⁵⁷ Desilles died of his injuries six weeks after the battle, and enjoyed a brief renown for his attempt to stop the fighting. See for example, the performance of *Le Nouveau d'Assass* in the Théâtre Italien in late October, 1790. A. M. No. 293, 20 October 1790, p. 164.

sorry episode as a catalogue of blunders. Misguided in conception and tragic in execution: it was, for him, the very 'image d'une loi précipitée.'¹⁵⁸

The authorities' show of force on 20 September failed to close the book on Nancy, and the memory of the massacre continued to rumble on. Far from serving as an example of Revolutionary discipline to a mutinous army, the Parisian left re-invented the carnage at Nancy as a call to arms, and there was little the Assembly could do to stop it. For nearly two years, it remained an open sore infecting political life and Bouillé's emigration after Varennes did little to help the official line. Immediately after the festival, Prudhomme predicted that 'il ne serait pas téméraire d'assurer que dans très peu de temps, les Parisiens feront l'éloge funèbre du régiment de Châteauneuf.'¹⁵⁹ He was proved right in April 1792, when the soldiers, newly released from the hulks at Brest, were paraded through Paris, rattling their galley chains and pointing an accusing finger at the political order that had condemned them. In the intervening period, the massacre had become a metaphor for Revolutionary politics. For the right, it signified the threat of bloody anarchy and the need for stern measures that this implied, but for the left, Nancy represented the tyranny of the *ministériels*, and it was this version of events that ultimately carried the day. Thus in December, when Marat called for a popular uprising, he urged his readers 'Souvenez-vous du massacre de Nancy,' 'si vous ne les (the conspiracies of the *noirs*) prévenez, il vous égorgeront barbarement.' For the *Ami du Peuple*, Nancy had not brought the need for violence to an end: on the contrary, it furnished a pretext for further bloodshed, 'une insurrection générale, et des exécutions populaires.'¹⁶⁰ Marat's vision was undoubtedly extreme, but his interpretation demonstrates the authorities' inability to contain the constant proliferation of meaning that was implicit in such events. However, between Marat and the Assembly lay the rest of France, and in 1790, the attitude of the Val-de-Grâce battalion ultimately prevailed. For the vast majority, it was simply too difficult to celebrate the shedding of French blood by Frenchmen.

¹⁵⁸ L.-S. Mercier, *Fragmens de Politique et d'Histoire*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1793) vol. ii, p. 261.

¹⁵⁹ *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 63, 25 September 1790, p. 532.

¹⁶⁰ *Ami du peuple*, no. 318, 18 December 1790, p. 8.



1790 was, as Furet and Richet remarked, 'l'année heureuse' of the Revolution.¹⁶¹ For all the simmering discontents, the mutinies and the *bagarres*, this was the closest France came to social and political stability throughout the Revolutionary era. Of course, the seeds of future discord were sown that same year, but it was still an oasis of tranquillity in a turbulent decade. And yet, even in this, the year of the great Federation, there was no time to fix what memories to hold on to and what to cast aside as too troubling, too divisive. Commemorating the Revolution's dead remained contentious precisely because it inevitably had to deal with the question of violence, a violence that was, as Lucas has argued, 'both purifying and consolidating and yet also contaminating and dissolving.'¹⁶² But how was it possible to distinguish between these two forms of violence, between the shedding of 'pure and impure blood' in Lucas' words? When the new order was itself constantly contested, when 'violence was always just under the surface' of Revolutionary politics, monopolising the interpretation of that violence was imperative for an elite that thought of little but bringing the Revolution to a close.¹⁶³ To bring the meaning of Revolutionary violence under control was to bring the Revolution itself under control, and the act of commemoration lay at the heart of this endeavour.

Attempting to fix the meaning and the limits of this violence, the Revolution's rites of memory struggled to define what was the legitimate use of force, and what was unacceptable bloodshed. But even in 1790, this proved impossible. Despite the Assembly's best efforts, the memory of Nancy continued to poison revolutionary politics long after the ceremony that should have closed all discussion on the massacre. The deputies had allowed themselves to be provoked by radical taunts into glorifying an event that few wished to recall with the result that remembrance became hopelessly ensnared in the controversies of day-to-day politics. But the fractured memory of Nancy was simply the problem of revolutionary remembrance writ large. The memory of the Bastille was no different; it demanded recognition, it was simply too striking a symbol to ignore, but this very obligation to remember imposed a terrible burden on the new body politic. The 14 July cried out for monuments,

¹⁶¹ F. Furet and D. Richet, *La Révolution Française*, (Paris, 1973) pp.99 ff.

¹⁶² C. Lucas, 'Revolutionary Violence, the People and the Terror,' in K. M. Baker (ed.) *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture*, vol. iv, *The Terror*, pp. 57-81, p. 60.

paintings and festivities, but it also summoned up memories that many citizens would rather forget, for if the fall of the Bastille signified the end of tyranny, it also evoked the terrifying memory of a week when an impotent Assembly watched as the mob decided the fate of the nation. It meant, above all, the ghastly spectacle of de Launay being dragged through the streets to his death, soon to be followed by de Flesselles, Foulon and Berthier. The printers of the rue Saint-Jacques, the peasants of Saint-Maur and Foureau's monument to the *vainqueurs* openly accepted such scenes as an inescapable, even commendable, consequence of Revolution, and the same candour was evident in many other popular commemorations of the Bastille. However, for the National Assembly and the new order it represented, commemorating the Bastille was always more problematic. In 1789 and 1790, few deputies shared Robespierre's or more famously Barnave's *sang-froid* when confronted by the spectacle of the people in arms, and even fewer wished to glorify the *vainqueur* as a fitting example of active citizenship. On the contrary, for the majority of deputies, and for the respectable opinion exemplified by the likes of Hardy and Romme, the memory of 14 July remained indelibly scarred by the tensions between liberty and licence, and as time passed, this ambivalence became even more crippling. Bailly's trajectory from mourner in chief in August 1789 to delivering the *coup de grâce* to the memory of the *vainqueurs* a year later demonstrates the evolution of official attitudes in stark terms. Over the course of the year, a sense of embarrassed, slightly resentful, recognition gradually gave way to a mixture of fear and mistrust, and in the end, to a policy of absolute repudiation. By the time of the Federation, the *vainqueurs* were, in political terms, surplus to requirements.

However, this purely political rationale is, by itself, insufficient to explain the predicament confronting Revolutionary remembrance in 1789 and 1790, for the memory of the *vainqueur* also presented a variety of broader cultural problems that enlightened public opinion was ill equipped to deal with. Chief among these was the issue of how to represent violence, but perhaps more tellingly, the Bastille also raised the question of how to celebrate the heroism of the common man, a point that had never overly troubled the *philosophes*. However democratic or meritocratic the enlightened discourse of memory might seem, the *philosophes'* ambition to 'rendre la

¹⁶³ R. Cobb, *The Police and the People*, (Oxford, 1970) p. 86.

vertu aimable, le vice odieux' had simply never envisaged the circumstances whereby a barely literate cobbler or a suburban cabinet-maker could become the embodiment of heroic virtue. In this respect at least, the *bibliothèque bleue* with its menagerie of crafty peasants and intrepid apprentices was infinitely more accommodating to the demands of popular memory in 1789. So too, for all its equivocation, was the liturgy of the Church, which had, after all, spent some seventeen centuries celebrating the sacrifice of a carpenter's son. As a result, remembering the Bastille involved steering a path not simply between two very powerful, but conflicting political interpretations of Revolution, but also between two quite distinct cultural traditions.

If one man came close to achieving this impossible compromise, to finding the right vocabulary with which to remember the Revolution's dead, it was the *abbé* Fauchet. The very epitome of what van Kley has characterised as an 'ideologically promiscuous' century, Fauchet does not fit comfortably within the received wisdom of a pagan Enlightenment.¹⁶⁴ Possessing all the polish of a gifted Academician, well versed in the language of the *parti philosophique* and an ardent admirer of Rousseau, Fauchet was certainly enlightened, but he was a churchman above all else, an unpardonable sin in the eyes of many.¹⁶⁵ Étienne Dumont remembered him speaking in 1788:

il ne ressemble pas mal à un charlatan qui vend sur ses tréteaux deux drogues, dont l'une s'appelle l'Enfer et l'autre, le Paradis; il gesticule très artistement, mais sa déclamation me paraît sans mollesse et jamais un mot ne part de son cœur. Il a un style très brillant... sans être orateur à mon avis.¹⁶⁶

Still peddling his 'deux drogues' in 1789, Fauchet's revolutionary career would be defined by an attempt to reconcile democratic politics with a radically reformed and re-invigorated Catholicism. The virtues of Christianity and of *la patrie* were, for Fauchet, inseparable; Revolutionary France would be the land where 'la voix du Peuple est la voix de Dieu, parce qu'elle est celle de la Nature et de la Société.'¹⁶⁷ Religion, he believed, had divided men for too long, and it was time to 'la leur

¹⁶⁴ D. van Kley, *The Religious Origins of the French Revolution: from Calvin to the Civil Constitution, 1560-1791*, (New Haven, 1996) p. 299.

¹⁶⁵ Fauchet's unapologetically clerical status doubtless contributed to the hostility he encountered from the *Correspondance Littéraire*, which, in 1786, dismissed his eulogy of the admittedly rather worthless Duc d'Orléans as pompous claptrap. *Corr. Litt.* vol. xiv, pp. 342-4.

¹⁶⁶ Cited in J. Bénétruy, *L'Atelier de Mirabeau, quatre proscrits genevois dans la tourmente révolutionnaire*, (Geneva, 1962) p. 151.

¹⁶⁷ Fauchet, *De la Religion Nationale*, (Paris, 1789) B. N. Lb39/1763, p. 8.

montrer dans sa nudité chaste, dans sa vérité pure.'¹⁶⁸ If all this sounded suspiciously deist for a man of the cloth, it was not. Fauchet's beliefs were firmly rooted in Revelation, but beyond this, he was quite open to suggestion. Certainly, he was unconventional. Rumours of 'une chaste épouse enlevée à son mari' gave satirists ample ammunition for scandal, while the charge that he preached *la loi agraire* later dogged his every step, but whatever his eccentricities, he struck a chord with the people.¹⁶⁹ Few other preachers in 1789 would go so far as to declare that 'c'est l'aristocratie qui a crucifié le fils de Dieu, or to describe Jesus as 'la divinité concitoyenne du genre-humain', but Fauchet's audacity was part of his appeal.¹⁷⁰ While many of his peers floundered at the prospect of honouring the *vainqueur*, he refused either to ignore or to condemn the bloodier aspects of the Revolution: the much vaunted bullet holes in his cassock made such a change of heart unlikely. Instead, he glorified the ordinary men and women who had fought and died for liberty and sanctified their memory. Fêted by popular opinion, he was 'le premier orateur de la liberté française.'¹⁷¹

Fauchet's uncompromising advocacy of the popular cause doubtless explains his extraordinary popularity in 1789, but his rhetorical success was as much a cultural phenomenon as it was a matter of political outlook. For all his democratic idealism, his real achievement lay in his ability to draw upon two quite different rhetorical traditions, the everyday language of the pulpit and the more rarefied discourse of the Academy, and to forge an idiom that was both radical enough to accommodate the new circumstances and traditional enough to be understood by a socially diverse audience. His various *Discours* were a compromise between the enlightened sensibilities of the revolutionary elite and the customary beliefs and values of the *menu peuple* who composed the congregations of these ceremonies, and for whom

¹⁶⁸ *Premier Discours, prononcé par M. l'abbé Fauchet, pour l'inauguration de la Confédération universelle des Ami de la Vérité*, reprinted in the *Bouche de Fer*, no. iii, October 1790, p. 20.

¹⁶⁹ See for example, the scurrilous claims made in the anonymous broadside, *Oraison funèbre des Gardes Nationaux tués à l'affaire de Nancy*, (s.l., 1790) B. L., F1093, no. 3, p. 3. This is presumably a reference to a certain Mme. de Calon who appears in a compromising position with Fauchet in a cartoon from late 1791: *Sujet de la Sainte Colère de L'Evêque du Calvados contre les Prêtres Réfractaires*, Chester Beatty Library, AC no. 2953. This reputation followed him to the Calvados, where his arrival as bishop in 1791 scandalised many conservative Catholics. Hufton, *Bayeux*, p. 175.

¹⁷⁰ Fauchet, *Discours sur la Liberté Française prononcé le mercredi 4 août 1789...*, p. 8, and *Second discours sur la Liberté Française, prononcé le 31 août 1789, dans l'église paroissiale de Sainte-Marguerite...*, (Paris, 1789) B. N. Lb39/2275, p. 21.

¹⁷¹ A. M. no. 37, 8 August 1789, p. 305.

religion still remained 'the only frame of reference that had any significant meaning.'¹⁷² While there was clearly some interaction between these two cultural spheres, and Jacques Ménétra's *Journal* offers ample evidence of this, they nevertheless remained quite distinct social and ideological realms, interpreting events according to their own specific criteria, and acting according to very different rules of conduct. Fauchet's significance lies in his ability to navigate skilfully between these two worlds, and to interpret the events of the Revolution in a manner that was accessible to all. The result was not quite seamless, but under the circumstances, to expect complete consistency might seem pedantic. In the wake of the fear and the bloodshed, Fauchet offered his congregations much needed solace in a language they could understand, and he did it with panache. Unlike so many of his contemporaries, unlike Doyen or Mounier, he spoke to and for the men and women whose vision of the Revolution was reflected in the makeshift prints of the rue St. Jacques or in the gratuitously literal festivities of Saint-Maur. Fauchet gave a voice to the 'classes silencieuses', and in return, 'le public aime à l'entendre.'¹⁷³

Fauchet's social and political radicalism clearly sets him apart from the majority of his confreres, and yet, his sermons are characteristic nevertheless, not of a certain breed of enlightened cleric for these were rare enough, but of the culture of popular commemoration in 1789. Whatever political inflections might distinguish Fauchet from the conservative Saint-Martin or the future refractory Zénon de Crepy, their sermons shared one common theme, an overwhelming certainty that the Revolution was God's will. That the clergy should present events in this light was perhaps inevitable, but crucially, their congregations shared this assumption too. How else can we explain the massed ranks of market women, clad in white, processing solemnly through the streets of Paris throughout the autumn to give thanks to Sainte-Geneviève 'en actions et graces de l'heureuse révolution qui vient de s'opérer'?¹⁷⁴ The patron of Paris had been their support in previous times of crisis, and in 1789, it was to her that they instinctively turned to give thanks for the city's deliverance.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² Kaplow, *The Names of Kings*, p. 117.

¹⁷³ F. Furet, 'Pour une définition des classes inférieures à l'époque moderne', *Annales, E. S. C.*, vol. xviii, no. 3 (1963) pp. 459-474, and *Chronique de Paris*, no. xxix, 21 September 1789, p. 114.

¹⁷⁴ *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 5, 15 August 1789, p. 9. See also *A. M.* no. 37, 8 August 1789, p. 305, *Chronique de Paris*, no. 23, 15 September 1789, p. 90, and Bailly, *Mémoires*, vol. ii, p. 245.

¹⁷⁵ On the cult of Saint Geneviève see, S. L. Kaplan, 'Religion, Subsistence and Social Control: The Uses of Sainte-Geneviève', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. xviii, (1980) pp.142-68.

By mid-August, these processions had become an almost daily occurrence as hundreds of women from every district followed in the footsteps of the *femmes du marché Saint Martin*, first to the tomb of Sainte-Geneviève and then to the Hôtel de Ville to pay their respects to Mayor Bailly, or to present a *pain béni* to Lafayette.¹⁷⁶ Surveying the serried ranks of the *petit peuple* marching up the hill to Sainte-Geneviève, Hardy speculated anxiously that 'la piété ne formait pas malheureusement tout le motif' of their endeavours, but the sincerity of their motives should not be doubted simply because they did not conform to his austere standards of personal piety.¹⁷⁷ These ostentatious devotions alarmed and offended Hardy's Jansenist instincts, but such displays of popular religiosity had always been inclined, as Mercier recognised, to 'tourne le dos au saint sacrifice de la messe, pour se prosterner devant la sainte bergère.'¹⁷⁸ In a summer of fear and confusion, the intimacy of this ritual world and the familiarity of the beliefs it expressed helped to make sense of a world turned upside down.

If the doctrinal propriety of these processions was sometimes questionable, the fundamental conception of the divine that inspired them was not. Far removed from the remote, indifferent deity so beloved of Voltaireans, these rites addressed a dynamic, miraculous God, intimately involved in the fate of man, but vengeful if ignored. Of course, this 'contractual concept of the supernatural' was not unique to washerwomen and fishwives.¹⁷⁹ The deputies celebrated their *Te Deums* and the Guard's battalions received their blessings one by one. It might, of course, be objected that the *Te Deum* was simply part of the established repertoire of civic ceremonial, and it seems likely that many deputies were just going through the motions during these rites, but for ordinary Parisians, these daily acts of thanksgiving represented a quite different order of belief from the formalities observed by Revolutionary officialdom.¹⁸⁰ For the hundreds, sometimes thousands, of women

¹⁷⁶ Hardy, *Mes Loisirs*, vol. viii, pp. 428-9.

¹⁷⁷ These processions continued into September, when a 1,200 strong procession descended on the shrine from the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. For an account of some of these processions, see Hardy, *Mes Loisirs*, vol. viii, pp. 428-9, 437-8, 441, 445, 455, 462, 469, 473, 475.

¹⁷⁸ Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*, vol. i, p. 442.

¹⁷⁹ O. Hufton, 'The French Church', in W. J. Callahan and D. Higgs, (eds.) *Church and Society in Catholic Europe of the eighteenth century*, (Cambridge, 1979) pp. 13-33, p. 26.

¹⁸⁰ The rather perfunctory tone of Adrien Duquesnoy's account of the *Te Deum* that was held to celebrate the King's visit to Paris on July 16th would seem to suggest as much. A. Duquesnoy, *Journal d'Adrien Duquesnoy, député du Tiers État de Bar-le-Duc sur l'Assemblée Constituante*, R. Crèveœur, ed. 2 vols. (Paris, 1894) vol. i, p. 212.

who made their way to the tomb of Sainte-Geneviève and then to the Hôtel de Ville, the sacred and the profane were inextricably linked, but crucially, it was to the sacred that they turned first. This unprompted eruption of popular religious fervour suggests the extent to which an essentially religious, if not especially orthodox, view of the world as a moral order helped to shape popular reactions to the Revolution in 1789. The people of Paris did not need the clergy's prompting to identify the hand of God in the unfolding of events: this providential rationale came naturally to them and Fauchet knew it. He was, after all, preaching to the converted.

Bewildered by the enormity of the change that had engulfed them, French men and women turned to the familiar for meaning and for consolation. Ransacking an abundantly stocked 'archive of memory', the Parisian public created a complex, but highly traditional vocabulary of commemoration, laden with diverse motifs drawn from the rituals and symbols of conventional civic ceremonial, the rites and responsibilities of the confraternities, and the crude images of the *bibliothèque bleue*. Sometimes, but only sometimes, they turned to the antique for inspiration, though as often as not, theirs was a mongrel classicism distilled from another source. Yet, for all these diverse symbolic accretions, these disparate elements did not impart meaning to events in any coherent way. They were little more than embellishments, the established trappings of pomp and circumstance. In order to uncover the meaning of the Revolution, the people turned instead to the force that had shaped their lives for centuries, the faith that still furnished 'les repères principaux qui donnent sens au monde, au temps, à la vie'.¹⁸¹ Roger Chartier's portrait of eighteenth century French society as an increasingly fragmented collection of disconnected cultural communities is convincing in many respects.¹⁸² However, it seriously underestimates the cultural stability imparted by the fundamentally religious outlook articulated in the processions of thanksgiving and the funeral ceremonies of 1789. Despite the ravages wrought by the century of *Unigenitus*, despite the anticlerical charms of philosophic tracts and pornographic pamphlets, despite the lure of the tavern and the big city, the language of the Church still represented the only medium that could unite both marquis and market-woman in a common understanding of the events that had just taken place. Just as importantly, given the institutional chaos that prevailed that

¹⁸¹ D. Roche, *La France des Lumières*, (Paris, 1993) p. 528.

¹⁸² 'Texts, Symbols and Frenchness', in R. Chartier, *Cultural History*, (London, 1988) p. 104.

summer, the Church represented the only organisation that could associate such different social groups in a collective ritual response to the Revolution.

Familiar words, familiar gestures, but above all, familiar faces. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's description of the priest as the 'avocat naturel des malheureux' combines sentimentality and wishful thinking in equal measure, but it nevertheless contains a kernel of truth, if only by default.¹⁸³ However much the rapacity of some *curés* offended popular opinion, and 'à bas la calotte' was undoubtedly heard with increasing frequency in Paris during these months, the poor could expect scant sympathy from their enlightened betters and they knew it.¹⁸⁴ Notwithstanding the discontents that festered beneath the surface of parish life, the clergy retained, as Burstin suggests, 'ses fonctions et demeurait le point de référence incontesté pour la population'.¹⁸⁵ Despite the challenges posed by an increasingly politicised and self-confident bourgeoisie, the priest remained the single most important intermediary between the community and the outside world. As the recorder of births and deaths and the indispensable officiant in parish ritual, he was both the custodian of local memory and the focal point of ceremonial life in the *quartier*. It was, therefore, inevitable that the majority of French men and women should look to men like Fauchet, Saint-Martin, Dom Bailleul and a host of other clerics to make sense of the events that had overtaken them in 1789. Certainly, some priests were less than confident in adapting the old words to the new circumstances, some did not even try, but many carried off the new demands of revolutionary memory with aplomb. Far from rejecting the traditional language of the sacred, it was reconfigured in their

¹⁸³ Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, 'Vœux d'un Solitaire', in *Œuvres Complètes*, (Paris, 1826 ed.) vol. xi, p. 63.

¹⁸⁴ The scale of the fees charged for burials were especially unpopular. In July 1789, one anonymous author castigated the clergy for their avarice in this respect, singling out the curé of Saint-Marguerite for particular abuse for charging 22 livres, 10 sols for even the most rudimentary funeral. *Premier dialogue entre une poissarde et un fort de la halle sur les affaires présentes*, (Paris, s.d.) B. N. Lb39/7577, p. 11. The next month, a procession to mark the Feast of the Assumption on the Ile-de-la-Cité was disrupted by cries of 'à bas la calotte' and 'il faudrait les mettre à la lanterne', and the same sentiments were expressed by many of the women who marched to Versailles in October. S. Hardy, *Journal de mes Loisirs*, vol. viii, pp. 435-6, and A. Mathiez, 'Étude Critique sur les journées des 5 et 6 octobre 1789', *Revue Historique*, lxxvii, (1898) p. 261.

¹⁸⁵ H. Burstin, *Le Faubourg Saint-Marcel à l'époque Révolutionnaire: Structure économique et composition sociale*, (Paris, 1983) p. 59.

hands to represent a new, re-invented alliance of Church and State, to celebrate, in Fauchet's words, 'les fondements d'une cité nouvelle.'¹⁸⁶

In June 1789, it had been, as it was frequently observed at the time, 'ces f.... curés qui ont fait la Révolution', and in the months that followed, it fell to the same men to consecrate the memory of its heroes.¹⁸⁷ The medium, as Victor Turner has argued, is part of the message, and the medium of Revolutionary memory in 1789 was overwhelmingly sacred.¹⁸⁸ In churches lit by votive candles and echoing with the sound of the *de Profundis*; the smell of incense was barely diluted by a smattering of 'discours philosophique et patriotique.' There is, in truth, precious little evidence of any 'laïcisation de la mémoire' here.¹⁸⁹ For these ordinary men and women living in extraordinary times, the priest was the mediator of revolutionary memory, and the parish church was its temple. When these revolutionaries wished to honour their dead, it was to the Church that they turned. The alternative was hardly respectable, and these revolutionaries were respectable to a fault.

¹⁸⁶ C. Fauchet, *Éloge civique de Benjamin Franklin, prononcé le 21 juillet 1790 dans la Rotonde au nom de la Commune de Paris...*, (Paris, 1790), p. 1.

¹⁸⁷ Cited in F. Lebrun, ed. *Histoire des catholiques en France du Xve siècle à nos jours*, (Paris, 1980) p. 272.

¹⁸⁸ V. Turner, *The Anthropology of Ritual*, (New York, 1988) p. 93. Tambiah's argument is essentially the same in 'A Performative Approach to Ritual', S. Tambiah, *Culture, Thought, and Social Action*, (Harvard, 1985) pp. 123-66.

¹⁸⁹ Bonnet, *Naissance du Panthéon*, p. 53.

Chapter III

Des Fondateurs de la Liberté

Despite Fauchet's impassioned advocacy, the political nation could not unite around the commemoration of the *vainqueurs*. In 1790, their memory was too troubling and their example too ambiguous to celebrate with any real conviction, let alone enthusiasm. Of course, it would not always be so. By 1793, the *vainqueurs* had come to occupy pride of place in the *sans-culottes*' own particular apostolic succession, but in 1790, their example was best forgotten.¹ The memory of the Guardsmen who died at Nancy fared little better. Having won few converts to its cause on 20 September the National Assembly sulkily abandoned these intrepid 'défenseurs de la loi' to the anathemas of the left and tried to forget the entire episode. In place of these too divisive memories, the nation continued to bask in the Federation's promise of an orderly end to the Revolution under the benevolent gaze of the *roi des Français*. The festivities were, of course, premature and the consensus they celebrated a chimera. If any single event sent the Revolution skidding off course, it was the Assembly's decision to impose an oath of loyalty on the nation's clergy in the winter of 1790. The Assembly's handling of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy had been ill judged from the start, but the imposition of the oath, and its widespread rejection the following spring, transformed the political climate in France. By forcing the clergy,

¹ For the *sans-culottes* who invaded the Convention in May 1793, the ghosts of past *journées* justified the purge of the Girondins: 'le sang des patriotes versé le 14 juillet, devant la Bastille, le sang des républicains expirants le 10 août, sous les ruines du trône, les os blanchis de nos frères, morts dans les combats pour la liberté, la voix de la France entière, tout nous crie: résistance à l'oppression.' A. M.

and by extension, their congregations to choose between the Revolution and their faith, the Assembly laid bare all the tensions, bitterness and resentments that had seethed beneath the surface of Revolutionary politics since 1789. It handed the right a cause to unite around, and converted vast swathes of an already disgruntled peasantry from mounting scepticism about the Revolution to open antagonism. The oath, and the schism that proceeded from it, was the beginning of the Revolutionary tragedy.

As the euphoria of 1790 gave way to the anxieties of 1791, the need to represent Revolutionary authority before a disenchanted nation had never been so urgent. And yet, as the religious crisis unfolded, it became increasingly apparent that re-packaging the king as an enlightened *roi-citoyen* was no longer adequate to the demands of Revolutionary politics. Under the very best of circumstances, the unfortunate Louis made an unlikely 'charismatic centre' for the new nation,² but in the year that followed the Federation, what had been merely implausible became downright untenable. A whole succession of issues, from the royal veto to the rumours that enveloped *l'Autrichienne*, had dramatised an ever-widening gulf between the will of the king and that of the Assembly, but ultimately, it was the religious question that proved decisive. Louis' obvious reluctance to enact the oath decree in December, followed by the emigration of Mesdames de France in February, and the Royal family's abortive expedition to Saint-Cloud in April gave little reason to doubt where the King's sympathies lay on the Civil Constitution. Confronted by mounting popular opposition and the surly disaffection of the monarch in whom so many hopes had been placed, the Revolution underwent a crisis of confidence. With, as Lynn Hunt suggests, 'neither paternal origins nor a clear lineage' the new Revolutionary elite struggled to impose its authority upon an increasingly sceptical public.³ The promised union of 'Nation, Law and King' was already disintegrating before it finally collapsed on the road from Varennes. In 1791, it was time to find a new icon of Revolution.

no. 152, 1 June 1793, p. 522.

² On the idea of the 'charismatic centre', see C. Geertz, 'Kings, Centres and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power', in J. Ben-David, and T. Nichols Clarke, eds. *Culture and its Creators: Essays in Honour of Edward Shils*, (Chicago, 1977), pp. 150-171.

³ L. Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution*, (London, 1986) p. 26.

In many respects, Jacques-Louis David's epic *Serment du Jeu de Paume* would seem to herald this new beginning in the Revolution's representation of itself. David was not the first artist to celebrate the deputies as the founding fathers of the Revolution. Already in 1789, enterprising engravers such as Déjabin and Alix had announced their intention to 'transmettre aux siècles futures l'image des fondateurs de la liberté française', and the municipality of Sens had even proposed raising a monument exclusively in their honour, but these were isolated initiatives during the Revolution's first eighteen months.⁴ The king remained the focal point of the artistic community's endeavours until David suddenly brought the deputies centre-stage in this immense work. Even the scale of David's ambition was exceptional. Measuring over thirty by twenty feet, the sheer grandeur of the painting was itself a fitting tribute to the moment when the Third Estate finally 'cut the cable' on 20 June 1789. The heroic bearing of the deputies, the sense of the sublime suggested by the approaching storm outside, the Christ-like portrayal of Bailly at the centre of the picture, and above all, the total absence of the king, marked a profound rupture with all previous attempts to capture the meaning of the Revolution on canvas.⁵ In place of the stodgy allegories and clichéd monuments that had placed Louis at the heart of Revolutionary project in 1790, David offered the French people a triumphant vision of a new sovereign, a self-assured nation united in the absence of the king:

L'histoire d'aucun peuple ne m'offre rien de si grand, de si sublime que ce serment du Jeu de Paume... Nation française! C'est ta gloire que je veux propager... c'est une grande leçon que je veux vous donner.⁶

David's 'grand leçon' epitomises the confident didacticism of enlightened aesthetics, and yet, paradoxically, the Revolutionary nation conspicuously failed to respond to this generous offer. Certainly, the Jacobin club's disastrous attempts to finance the

⁴ Déjabin's *Portraits des Députés de l'Assemblée Nationale* and Pierre-Michel Alix's *Collection Générale des portraits de MM. Les députés à l'Assemblée Nationale dédié à Nosseigneurs de Assemblée Nationale* were the first such collections to appear in 1789. By the summer of 1790, these had been joined by Vérité's *Collection des portraits de MM. Les députés à l'Assemblée nationale* as advertised in *A. M.* no. 196, 15 July 1790, p. 126. The quotation is taken from an advertisement for Déjabin's *Portraits des Députés* in the *Gazette de France*, November 1789, cited in *L'Art de l'Estampe et la Révolution Française*, (Paris, 1977) p. 20. Sens's obelisk was to be inscribed with the names of all the deputies, but as we have seen, such initiatives remained rare in 1789. *Annales patriotiques et littéraires*, no. xc, 31 December 1789, p. 1, and the anonymous plan for a monument: *Hommage à l'Assemblée Nationale*, B. N., Estampes, coll. Hennin, no. 10530.

⁵ Specialised studies of the iconography and symbolism of the *Jeu de Paume* abound. See in particular, P. Bordes' definitive essay, *Le Serment du Jeu de Paume de Jacques-Louis David: Le peintre, son milieu et son temps de 1789 à 1792*, (Paris, 1983) and, V. Lee, 'Jacques-Louis David: the Versailles Sketchbook', *The Burlington Magazine*, (1969) pp. 197-208 and pp. 360-369.

⁶ David later explained his aims in these terms, *A. P.* vol. 38, 5 February 1792, pp. 247-248.

painting would suggest as much. Unable to pay for such a grandiose project alone, David had sought the club's support to fund his venture, and a massive subscription drive was launched in December 1790. Luminaries such as Barère, Dubois-Crancé and Mirabeau gave the scheme unstinting support, but despite these celebrity endorsements, the end-result was little short of a fiasco.⁷ A few societies excelled themselves, submitting multiple subscriptions, but when the accounts were drawn up the following June, only 573 orders had been received out of the 3,000 originally anticipated, and the majority of these even failed to pledge the required sum of 24 *livres*.⁸ After a well-publicised campaign lasting nearly six months, and with the promise of an engraving of the finished work as an inducement, the Jacobins had raised a paltry 5,631 *livres* to meet the painting's total cost of 72,000 *livres*.⁹ It was not even enough to pay for the frame. Humiliated by this abject failure in the market place, the club was forced to appeal to the National Assembly to rescue its ailing project from collapse. Two days before its dissolution, the deputies duly obliged, shouldering the full cost of the work after Barère had acclaimed David's work as 'le premier monument de la Révolution', but even Barère's expansive rhetoric could not camouflage the Jacobins' embarrassment.¹⁰ The Salon reviews that autumn were ecstatic, but the critics' enthusiasm cannot disguise the fact that the *Serment du Jeu de Paume* had singularly failed to obtain the imprimatur of public opinion.

Historians have long been drawn to David's work as a yardstick of Revolutionary opinion, and yet, for all its compositional finesse and political prescience, the *Serment du Jeu de Paume* is a poor guide to the meaning of memory in 1791. David's radical vision, and in 1791 it was radical enough to shatter friendships, is simply too avant-garde to be representative of public opinion at this stage of the Revolution.¹¹ The implicit republicanism of the surviving sketches may seem consistent with the drift of politics after Varennes, but at the time of their composition earlier that spring, such radicalism was more than most right-thinking patriots would ever have felt comfortable with. In purely political terms, David's design was months, if not years,

⁷ Aulard, *Jacobins*, vol. i, p. 366.

⁸ Lyon's *clubistes*, for example, requested fourteen copies of the engraving. Kennedy, *The Jacobin clubs*, vol. i, p. 38. For the final results of the subscription drive, see Aulard, *Jacobins*, vol. ii, p. 512.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *A. P.* vol. xxxi, p. 438.

¹¹ Mme de Genlis and David quarrelled bitterly over the meaning of the 'infernale' thunderbolt hitting the Royal chapel in the top left hand corner of the composition. Genlis, *Mémoires*, vol. iv, p. 103.

ahead of its time. However, there is another, perhaps more telling, reason why the *Serment du Jeu de Paume* lends an illusory coherence to the Revolution's sense of its own past in 1791. David's artistry is, above all, too premeditated. Its meaning is too studied and its execution too perfect to serve as a paradigm for commemoration in 1791. This is not to say that public opinion spurned the celebration of the Revolution or ignored the memory of its heroes; quite the contrary, but it is to suggest that the public chose to commemorate in its own haphazard way, as the need arose, and with the resources available to it. In order to understand the meaning of remembrance in 1791, we must turn away from David's unfinished masterpiece and look instead to the establishment of the revolutionary Panthéon that April, to the circumstances that inspired it, and to the vast crowds and great pageants that wound their way through Paris to this long-awaited temple of virtue. But we must also look to the provinces, the towns and villages, the clubs and communes where commemoration was just as vibrant, just as urgent as in Paris, and where the stakes involved in remembering the past were just as high.

The pantheonisation of Mirabeau was universally judged a resounding success, but it was, in reality, only the last act in a drama that had begun the week before. News of Mirabeau's illness broke on Tuesday, 29 March, and from that moment on, his home on the rue Chaussée d'Antin was virtually besieged by anxious crowds, 'de toute état, de tout parti, de toute opinion'.¹² Delegations from the Assembly, the municipality and the Jacobin club scuttled up and down the rue Chaussée d'Antin for the latest reports on his condition, and the press carried blow-by-blow accounts of his final hours.¹³ The public consternation was astonishing: the political consequences of the deathbed were normally the preserve of royalty, but Mirabeau was exceptional. His renown, or rather notoriety, as a one-man *cause célèbre* long preceded his election to the Estates General, where as both victim of the notorious *lettres de cachet* and *déclassé* noble turned patriot deputy, he seemed to embody the Revolutionary cause. However, it was his combination of extraordinary parliamentary presence and exuberant demagoguery that ensured Mirabeau an unrivalled reputation in the

¹² Ferrières, *Mémoires*, vol. i, p. 305.

¹³ Ruault, *Gazette d'un Parisien*, p. 229.

National Assembly. One of the few representatives to successfully combine the rôle of journalist and legislator, he spoke more often in debates, and usually with greater effect, than any other deputy. Indeed, as Tackett suggests, 'no other individual came closer to exercising true charisma within the Assembly.'¹⁴ If the legislator was, as Bailly suggested, 'un objet de vénération publique', then Mirabeau was 'un être unique'.¹⁵ Centre-stage in David's *Serment du Jeu de Paume*, he was, in 1789 at least, the colossus of the Assembly. By 1791, this reputation was undeniably in decline; persistent rumours of bribery and intrigue had taken their toll, but even so, Mirabeau remained a force to be reckoned with.

When the end finally came, it was, by all accounts, a good death. Perhaps not in the traditional sense of the *ars moriendi*, but a good death nevertheless. Almost too good in fact, for there is a sense that the whole affair had been carefully stage-managed. The procession of distraught friends paying their last respects, the 'déchirant' deathbed scene, and the Tribune's suitably stoic last words all seem to justify Talleyrand's malicious suggestion that 'il a dramatisé sa mort'.¹⁶ Mirabeau died, one senses, with one eye on posterity, and another on antiquity, and the press faithfully followed his lead. Desmoulins invoked Seneca and Hercules to describe 'la fermeté d'un sage' with which he had faced his last hours, while Gorsas opted for the 'funérailles d'Achille', but the most appropriate model seemed to be David's death of Socrates, and in this respect, the omens were ominous.¹⁷ As news of Mirabeau's death spread across Paris the city was engulfed by rumour, but one word: 'poison', it seems, was whispered at every street corner.¹⁸

If the tragedy opened with a well-rehearsed deathbed scene, then act two of the death of Mirabeau was dominated by an even more carefully choreographed post-mortem.

¹⁴ Tackett, *Becoming a Revolutionary*, p. 226. For the frequency of Mirabeau's contributions to debates, see *ibid.* p. 233.

¹⁵ Bailly, *Mémoires*, vol. i, p. 69, and E. Dumont, *Souvenirs sur Mirabeau et sur les Deux Premières Assemblées Législatives*, (Paris, 1950 ed.) p. 119.

¹⁶ Talleyrand's comment is reported in Dumont, *Souvenirs sur Mirabeau*, p. 170. For press reaction more generally, see Prudhomme's conclusion that 'il rendit le dernier soupir dans les bras de l'amitié', or as Hébert put it more colloquially: 'il a terminé sa vie avec autant de courage qu'un grenadier, foutre.' *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 91, 9 April 1791, p. 64 and *Le Père Duchesne*, no. 47, p. 3.

¹⁷ *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 72, pp. 291, 293, and *Courrier des 83 départements*, 4 April 1791, p. 55.

¹⁸ Having heard that 'Mirabeau est mort empoisonné', the *Père Duchesne*'s 'colère' against 'les jean-foutres de monarchiens' was more than usually 'grand'. *Le Père Duchesne*, no. 48, pp. 1 and 4.

In the light of the rumours that gripped Paris, it became imperative to dispel the obscurity that surrounded this all too sudden death by applying the full rigour of eighteenth-century medical science. Too many versions of the cause of death were circulating in the city, and while those attributing Mirabeau's downfall to the over-exertions of two actresses from the *Opéra* were embarrassing, others were positively dangerous.¹⁹ Marat's suggestion that Mirabeau had been poisoned for failing (finally) to co-operate with the aristocracy's latest plot was less florid than the orgy theory, but it was infinitely more damaging to revolutionary accord.²⁰ Already on Sunday morning, posters had appeared attributing his demise to the machinations of the triumvirs, and as both de Ferrières and the marquis de Sade realised, this sudden death threatened to engulf the entire body politic: 'les démocrates rejetèrent le crime sur la cour; les aristocrates le renvoyèrent aux jacobins.'²¹ Such a menace to the already imperilled revolutionary consensus could not be tolerated: Mirabeau's ghost could not be allowed to haunt the political stage and 'devenir un prétexte aux plus abominables projets.'²² Science offered the only solution, and an autopsy was ordered for Sunday afternoon to furnish the proofs needed to acquit the Court, or the Lameths, or the Jacobins, of the evil deed. It was a grand affair. A marquee was specially erected to accommodate the twenty-seven doctors, including Vicq d'Azir, the doyen of French medicine, and thirty or so witnesses from the Commune, *département* and sections who assembled to examine the cadaver.²³ There could be only one conclusion. Mirabeau had died of natural causes, and the surgeons' reassuring reports of the Tribune's patriotic exhaustion calmed the public disquiet.²⁴ Revolutionary integrity had been upheld, and the cream of French medical science attested to the fact.

¹⁹ Brissot was even obliging enough to name the actresses involved as 'mesdemoiselles Hélibourg et Colomb.' Brissot, *Mémoires, 1754-1793*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1912) vol. ii, p. 42. Duval also repeated this rumour as fact. G. Duval, *Souvenirs de la Terreur de 1788 à 1793*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1841) vol. i, p. 283.

²⁰ See his vituperative *Oraison funèbre de Riquetti* in the *Ami du Peuple*, no. 419, 4 April 1791, in Marat, *Oeuvres politiques*, vol. v. pp. 2649-50.

²¹ Ferrières, *Mémoires*, p. 306, and D. A. F. Sade, *Correspondance inédite du marquis de Sade, de ses proches et de ses familiers*, P. Bourdin (ed.) (Paris, 1929) p. 286.

²² *Courrier des 83 départements*, 4 April 1791, p. 59.

²³ *Procès-verbal de l'ouverture du cadavre de Honoré-Gabriel-Victor Riquetti, ci-devant Mirabeau, décédé à neuf heures trois quarts du matin, le 2 avril*, (Paris, 1791) B. L. F.R. 54. no. 25.

²⁴ Cabanis published the definitive account of the post-mortem. P.-J.-G. Cabanis, *Journal de la maladie et de la mort d'Honoré-Gabriel-Riquetti Mirabeau*, (Paris, 1791) B. L. F. 281, no. 9.

The autopsy cost over 1,200 *livres* to stage, but it was money well spent.²⁵ Although Hébert and Marat continued to revel in the poisoning theory for weeks to come, science had indeed furnished the antidote to the city's feverish obsession with plots.²⁶ Mirabeau's ghost had been clinically exorcised; but there now remained the thorny problem of how best to honour his memory, and both the municipality and the National Assembly seem to have badly misjudged the public mood on this matter. The response of the Jacobin club was, by contrast, rather more adroit. *Éloges* by Dubois-Crancé, Danton, and Barnave were listened to with due solemnity, and a period of eight days mourning decreed, even if, as *Le Lendemain* caustically remarked, 'ce deuil, pour quelques Jacobins, pourrait bien être un habit de veuve.'²⁷ By comparison, the municipality's declaration on Sunday that twelve of its members would attend the funeral was clearly inadequate, and was quickly revised in favour of attending *en masse* on Monday afternoon.²⁸ However, the National Assembly's reaction was even less seemly. When Mirabeau's death was announced on Saturday the 2nd, a tearful Barère demanded that the Assembly attend the funeral, and while this provoked a dramatic 'nous irons, nous irons tous!' the deputies evidently felt the matter rested there, and calmly moved on with the order of business.²⁹

The matter did not rest there; and the next morning, a deputation representing the city's forty-eight sections arrived in the Assembly to demand a state funeral. The sections were in no mood for half-measures, and demanded that Mirabeau be laid to rest on the *Champ de la Fédération*, insisting truculently that 'il faut prouver que les honneurs rendus jusqu'à ce moment aux rois appartient aussi aux hommes qui sont le bonheur et la gloire de leurs pays.'³⁰ Evidently uncomfortable with both the tone and the content of this suggestion, the deputies were initially dumbstruck.³¹ Goupil de Préfelne was the first to break the silence with a meandering allusion to the English

²⁵ B. H. V. P. mss. 733, fol. 228.

²⁶ According to Prudhomme: 'la publication du procès-verbal satisfait le peuple'. Hébert, however, dismissed the autopsy report as 'un tas de mensonges', while Marat remained firmly wedded to the poisoning theory. *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 91, p. 644, *Le Père Duchesne*, no. 48, p. 3, and *L'Ami du Peuple*, no. 426, 11 April 1791, in Marat, *Œuvres politiques*, p. 2688.

²⁷ For the society's resolutions and *Le Lendemain's* verdict, see Aulard, *Jacobins*, vol. ii, pp. 285-8.

²⁸ A. M. no. 94, 4 April 1791, p. 26. For the revised decision, see Lacroix, *Actes de la Commune*, 2e Série, vol. iii, p. 418.

²⁹ A. M., no. 93, 3 April 1791, p. 19.

³⁰ A. M. no. 94, 4 April 1791, p. 30.

³¹ According to Brissot, this proposal provoked 'un profound silence qui a duré cinq à six minutes.' *Le Patriote Français*, no. 604, 4 April 1791, p. 360.

practice of interring the illustrious dead in Westminster abbey, but the Assembly remained unsure of what line to take until a motion from the Parisian authorities finally cut the Gordian knot.³² On behalf of the département, Claude Emmanuel Pastoret took up Charles de Villette's recent proposal to convert the church of Sainte-Geneviève into a temple of revolutionary remembrance.³³ Arguing that 'les larmes que fait couler la perte d'un grand homme ne doivent être les larmes stériles', Pastoret promised soothingly that 'la tombe d'un grand homme devienne l'autel de la liberté'.³⁴ His proposal even had the advantage of including a ready-made draft bill; but even so, the deputies continued to hesitate. Robespierre, with uncharacteristic enthusiasm, supported Pastoret's suggestion immediately. Evidently more in tune with the popular mood, he reminded his colleagues that

Ce n'est pas au moment où l'on entend de toutes partes des regrets qu'excite la perte de cet homme illustre... que l'on pourrait s'opposer à ce qu'il fût décerné des marques d'honneur. J'appuis de tout mon pouvoir, ou plutôt de toute ma sensibilité, cette proposition.³⁵

Couched in such terms, Robespierre's support was a clear warning to the deputies to bow to public opinion lest their shilly-shallying be mistaken for more serious reservations. Even so, the scheme was referred to committee, only to be adopted with an imposing, if belated, show of unanimity the next day.³⁶

Camille Desmoulins' reaction to the establishment of the Panthéon was positively ecstatic: it was, he decided, one of the Assembly's 'plus beaux décrets'.³⁷ But in reality, the deputies had quite clearly failed to rise to the occasion, and had to be prodded into action by a mixture of popular pressure and their own inability to come up with a satisfactory alternative. At every step, the authorities had been faced with a series of *faits accomplis* and had merely bowed to the inevitable. Even the Commune's decision to rename the fashionable rue Chaussée d'Antin after Mirabeau was little more than the *de jure* recognition of the iron plaque that had appeared on the street corner two days before.³⁸ From ratifying the closure of the city's theatres to

³² A. M. no. 94, 4 April 1791, p. 30.

³³ Ibid., pp. 31-2. As we shall see, Villette had proposed this for Voltaire the previous November.

Aulard, *Jacobins*, vol. i, pp. 367-9.

³⁴ A. M. no. 94, 4 April 1791, p. 30.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 31.

³⁶ A. M. no. 95, 5 April 1791, pp. 39-40. Three deputies, however, did oppose the motion.

³⁷ *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 72, p. 321.

³⁸ For the official decision, see Tuetey, *Répertoire*, vol. i, no. 2069. For the unofficial initiative that preceded it, see the *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 91, 9 April 1791, p. 644.

actually establishing the Panthéon, it was popular opinion, as Robespierre implied, that led the way.³⁹ The distinguished aesthete, Quatremère de Quincy, no friend of popular initiative in this or any other matter, agreed, noting ruefully that 'l'opinion générale semblait avoir devancée... le décret de l'Assemblée.'⁴⁰ Unnerved by the need to honour Mirabeau with suitable aplomb, but unsure of how to respond to the mounting public clamour, the Assembly had been panicked into taking this momentous decision with little or no consideration of the consequences. The foundation of the Panthéon was the politics of the gesture on a grand scale.

It took a full hour for the cortège that carried Mirabeau's remains from the rue Chaussée d'Antin to the Panthéon to pass by.⁴¹ Sixty battalions of cavalry and infantry, and the same number of National Guardsmen, all bearing their weapons reversed, opened the march at five in the evening on Monday, 4 April, and this parade of civilian and military mourning was followed by an equally impressive retinue of ecclesiastics. Then came the tricolour-draped coffin and the urn bearing his heart, adorned only with a simple civic wreath in place of the customary coat of arms of one of the noblest families in France. The air was rent with a forlorn funeral march as the massed ranks of the National Assembly, the Parisian authorities, the Jacobin club, the *Société de 1789* and many other political clubs filed past. At eight o'clock, the cortège reached the church of Saint-Eustache, where the *abbé* Cerutti pronounced a stirring oration in the middle of the Requiem, which ended with a deafening salvo from the Guardsmen. The procession then resumed its course to Sainte-Geneviève, where the corpse was finally laid to rest at midnight.⁴²

The sheer immensity of the occasion was astonishing. Most observers estimated that several hundred thousand onlookers lined the route; some even put the figure at 400,000, but whatever the precise number, it was an extraordinary display of public

³⁹ Ferrières, *Mémoires*, book ix, p. 307.

⁴⁰ *A. M.* no. 103, 13 April 1791, p. 109.

⁴¹ *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 91, 9 April 1791, p. 649.

⁴² This account is compiled from reports in the *Moniteur*, no. 96, 6 April 1791, p. 42, the *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 91, 9 April 1791, and the *Courrier des 83 Départements*, 5 April 1791, p. 70 ff.

grief.⁴³ Mirabeau's funeral was, according to the usually phlegmatic Ferrières, 'une apothéose, un triomphe national', but what struck most witnesses was the impression of solemnity, even of reverence, that enveloped the entire ceremony.⁴⁴ The adjective *religieuse* was used repeatedly to describe the people's demeanour before this spectacle, but does this signify a sacralisation of the Revolution and its heroes? Or more prosaically, did the public respond with 'une attention presque religieuse' or 'un silence religieuse' to what was, quite simply, a religious ceremony? The tolling of church bells, the funereal music, the immense catafalque and High Mass in Saint-Eustache, and the massed ranks of the clergy all overwhelmed the lonely civic wreath and tricolour that adorned Mirabeau's coffin, and bestowed upon the entire event an unmistakably sacramental air. There was, in fact, little to distinguish Mirabeau's funeral from that of Louis XV some seventeen years previously, except perhaps the public's apathy in 1774.⁴⁵

In its processional form and Catholic liturgy, Mirabeau's funeral was a very traditional affair. Even the rhetorical highlight of the day, the *abbé* Cerutti's elegy in Saint-Eustache, owed more to the grand style of Jesuit oratory than it did to unadorned Jacobin eloquence. Insisting repeatedly that Mirabeau had 'sauvé la France', Cerutti acclaimed the Tribune as little short of a national messiah; a beatification which provoked an incredulous response from the left.⁴⁶ *Le Patriote Français* lambasted the *abbé's* 'mauvais goût' in no uncertain terms, while Desmoulins was incandescent with rage: Mirabeau was not, he angrily insisted, 'le fils-de Dieu': on the contrary, 'le peuple français s'est ressuscité lui-même'.⁴⁷ Yet, however much the tone of Cerutti's eulogy rankled with the leaders of radical opinion, it was widely echoed, both in Paris and the provinces, where a number of *éloges* developed the messianic comparison even further. Few were quite as forthright as Étienne Chompré in Marseilles, who hailed Mirabeau as 'the spirit of Jesus Christ in a mortal state', but many eulogists were more than willing to follow Cerutti's lead in acclaiming him the agent of 'la providence éternelle', or even more straightforwardly,

⁴³ *Courrier des 83 Départements*, 5 April 1791, p. 70.

⁴⁴ *Mémoires de Ferrières*, p. 308.

⁴⁵ For the public's indifference to the death of Louis XV, see A. Farge, *La Vie Fragile: Violence, pouvoirs et solidarités à Paris au XVIIIe siècle*, (Paris, 1986) p. 204.

⁴⁶ J.-A.-J. Cerutti, *Éloge funèbre de M. De Mirabeau prononcé le jour de ses funérailles dans l'église de St. Eustache...*, (Paris, 1791) B.N. Lb39 4772.

⁴⁷ *Le Patriote Français*, no. 609, 9 April 1791, p. 379, and *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no.

as a saviour sent to redeem the nation.⁴⁸ In the light of such extravagant accolades, Suzanne Labrousse's prediction of the Tribune's imminent resurrection seems rather less like the delusions of an unbalanced fantasist, and rather more like understandable over-enthusiasm.⁴⁹ Doubtless, Mirabeau would have been flattered by these messianic comparisons, but he would have been appalled by the synthesis of the sacred and the profane that they expressed, a synthesis he had expressly sought to proscribe after the festivals of 1790.⁵⁰ Few appreciated the irony at the time, but Mirabeau was laid to rest with all the pomp that eighteenth century Catholicism could bestow.

It was a familiar spectacle, and yet somehow, it all seemed very different. However, the novelty of this occasion did not lie in any ritual or symbolic innovation, for there was none, but in the notion that Bourbon ceremonial had never matched this in splendour and all recent precedents would seem to bear this out. As Panchoucke's *Moniteur* concluded solemnly: 'jamais cérémonie ne fut plus majestueuse.'⁵¹ The inference was obvious, but if criticism of royal ritual remained implicit in the semi-official *Moniteur*, others were less reserved in the gloss they put on the day's events. Mme Roland, for instance, described the funeral as 'plus augustes que celles des rois les plus orgueilleux', and the *Journal de la Révolution's* verdict was even more pointed:

Sous l'ancien régime, lorsque le roi...venait à mourir, vites dans les provinces des ordres pour chanter des *Libera* et du *De Profundis*. Sous la règne de la liberté, un citoyen à talent meurt, on n'a besoin de mendier des regrets.⁵²

Admittedly, few went as far as Prudhomme in quoting the perhaps apocryphal quip: 'Louis XVI peut mourir quand il voudra, jamais il n'aura pareil enterrement', but the

72, p. 329.

⁴⁸ For Chompré's unequivocal comparison in Marseilles, see M. Kennedy, *The Jacobin Club of Marseilles 1790-1794*, (Ithaca, 1973) p. 169. For Mirabeau as a providential figure, see the abbé Viard's *Quelques phrases à la louange du Grand Mirabeau, prononcé dans l'église paroissiale de Ligny, département de la Meuse, le 15 avril 1791...*, B. N. Lb39/4780, p. 3, and M. de Bras, *Discours prononcé dans l'église de Saint Paul... avant le service célébré en l'honneur de M. de Mirabeau ...par M. M. J. de Bras*, (Paris, s.d.) B.N. Lb39/4781, pp. 2-3.

⁴⁹ For Suzanne Labrousse's prophesy that Mirabeau would rise from the dead, along with the Dauphin who had died two years earlier, see C. Garrett, *Respectable Folly: Millenarians and the French Revolution in France and England*, (Baltimore, 1975) p. 60.

⁵⁰ His undelivered speech on *l'Instruction Publique* was explicit on this question: 'L'objet de nos fêtes nationales doit être seulement le culte de la liberté; le culte de la loi. Je conclus donc à ce qu'on n'y mêle jamais aucun appareil religieux.' *A. P.*, vol. xxx, pp. 512-54, p. 530.

⁵¹ *A. M.* no. 96, 6 April 1791, p. 42.

⁵² Mme Roland, *Lettres autographes à Bancal des Issarts*, (Paris, 1835 ed.) pp. 193-4, and Aulard,

same contrast between the genuine grandeur of revolutionary commemoration and the vain pomp of royal funerals was repeated incessantly in the patriot press.⁵³ This distinction between the hypocrisy of royal ceremonial and the heartfelt sincerity of revolutionary ritual was, however, the one discordant note that most observers allowed themselves. In the main, they preferred to stress the unanimity of the public in its loss.⁵⁴ For the first time since the *Fédération*, the nation seemed whole again as the enmities that had torn the Assembly apart evaporated in the great funeral procession. Marching behind their colleague's coffin, even the most hardened of political antagonisms dissolved as, for example, Sièyes walked arm in arm with his avowed rival, Charles de Lameth, at the head of the deputies.⁵⁵ As deputy and cleric, soldier and civilian paraded together under the tearful gaze of the public, it seemed as if 'tout le peuple français des 83 départements assistait en corps aux funérailles du plus éloquent des orateurs de la liberté.'⁵⁶ A pall of grief had descended upon the nation, and in its distress, France was again united, but in April 1791, this unity was constructed around the figure of the legislator alone.

A few brave spirits tried to break the spell cast by Mirabeau's death. Marat, as usual, spared no-one, least of all his readers, whom he warned: 'garde-toi de prostituer ton encens; garde tes larmes pour tes défenseurs intégrés, souviens-toi qu'il était l'un des valets nés du despote.'⁵⁷ Desmoulins too, soon came to regret his early enthusiasm. Having initially been swept up in the emotion of the moment, he ended his account of the funeral on a bitter note. Mirabeau, he concluded acidly, had died 'en odeur du patriotisme'.⁵⁸ However, when even Hébert was 'si navré que je ne puis exprimer ma douleur' at the death of 'ce bougre intrépide', these were isolated voices indeed.⁵⁹ Mirabeau's funeral had worked wonders, and the capital continued to bask in the afterglow of ritualised unanimity for weeks to come. Throughout April, the city's churches resounded to the sound of requiem masses, funeral orations and processions

Jacobins, vol. ii, p. 327.

⁵³ *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 91, 9 April 1791, p. 648.

⁵⁴ According to Gorsas, 'Paris ne s'occupe que de la perte de Mirabeau.' *Courrier des 83 départements*, 5 April 1791, p. 65.

⁵⁵ *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 72, p. 323.

⁵⁶ *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 91, 9 April 1791, p. 647.

⁵⁷ *L'Ami du Peuple*, no. 419, 4 April 1791, in Marat, *Œuvres politiques*, vol. v, p. 2649.

⁵⁸ *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 72, p. 325, the emphasis is in the original text.

⁵⁹ *Le Père Duchesne*, no. 47, p. 2. Only three weeks previously Hébert had devoted an entire issue to a virulent attack on 'ce bougre de Mirabeau.' *Le Père Duchesne*, no. 39, p. 1.

as sections, Guards battalions and political societies began to organise their own services in memory of the Tribune.⁶⁰ A few days after the funeral, the section Fontaine la Grenelle launched a fund to pay for an anniversary mass in perpetuity, and on the 14th, the *Société fraternelle des Deux Sexes* assembled in the church of Saint François d'Assise where Tallien led the congregation in a solemn oath: 'nous jurons tous sur ton tombeau, de vivre libres ou mourir.'⁶¹ Beyond the semi-official world of sections and societies, ordinary Parisians joined in the mourning with the same, perhaps even greater, ardour. On April 11, over a thousand 'ouvriers des travaux publics' gathered in the church of Saint-Laurent to pay their respects to Mirabeau, and their example was soon repeated in churches across the city.⁶² The next week, the unemployed labourers of the section de l'Île Saint-Louis organised a similar service in their own parish church, and over eight hundred 'ouvriers du Champs de Mars et de l'île aux Cyngnes' followed suit in the church of St. Thomas d'Acquin the following Sunday.⁶³ A month later, masses were still being said. Despite their recent prohibition, the spirit of the guilds lived on in the *service funèbre* staged by the *société fraternelle des compagnons maçons de Paris* on May 9th and in the requiem organised in Saint-Eustache by a group of *garçons cordonniers*, who raised 1,800 *livres* for charity in the process.⁶⁴ Churlishly, the Cordeliers deplored the common people's 'fatale idolâtrie', but they were clearly out of step with popular opinion.⁶⁵ The desire to honour the Tribune had reached into every corner of the capital, but this was as nothing compared to the reaction Mirabeau's death provoked in provincial France.

⁶⁰ See, for example, the service arranged by the Section du Faubourg Montmartre and the mass organised by the Guardsmen of Saint-Lazare in the church of Saint-Laurent. Aulard, *Jacobins*, vol. ii, p. 306 and Lacroix, *Actes de la Commune*, 2e Série, vol. iii, p. 428.

⁶¹ Aulard, *Jacobins*, vol. ii, p. 305 and J. L. Tallien, *Hommage à la mémoire d'Honoré Riquetti Mirabeau, Discours prononcé dans l'église paroissiale de Saint-François d'Assise, le 14 avril 1791...*, (Paris, 1791) B.N. Lb39 4778 p. 14.

⁶² Tuetey, *Répertoire*, vol. i, no. 2078.

⁶³ Tuetey, *Répertoire*, vol. i, no. 2082, and Aulard, *Jacobins*, vol. ii, p. 327.

⁶⁴ *Honneur Funèbre rendu aux mânes d'Honoré Gabriel Victor Riquetti ci-devant comte de Mirabeau, par la société fraternelle des Compagnons Maçons de Paris, célébré en l'église épiscopale et Paroissiale de Paris...*, B.N. Ln/27 14248. For the cobblers, see Lacroix, *Actes de la Commune*, 2e Série, vol. iii, p. 429.

⁶⁵ *Adresse aux patriotes sur les funérailles d'Honoré Riquetti Mirabeau*, (Paris, 1791) B. N. Lb40/2376.

Even the ships in the harbour flew their flags at half-mast.⁶⁶ Word of Mirabeau's death reached Rouen on April 4, and the news sent the city into a frenzy of activity. The municipality immediately decreed a period of mourning in honour of the Tribune, and the Jacobin club quickly set about organising its own memorial service.⁶⁷ The club's requiem was held three days later in the cathedral of Notre-Dame, where an impressive catafalque had been hastily erected for the purpose. The neo-classical memorial was bedecked with all the usual trappings of enlightened grief, a marble pyramid, an urn and civic crowns, but its focal point was a splendid altarpiece, crowned by a crucifix and surrounded by a rather combustible arrangement of cypress branches and candelabra. On the morning of the 7th, an immense crowd, including over a thousand 'pauvres citoyens' from the city's public works, assembled in the cathedral to hear mass said in memory of Mirabeau.⁶⁸ The eulogies were fulsome, and when all was said and done, over 2,400 *livres* worth of bread was donated to the poor of the city.⁶⁹ After the service, the congregation surged towards the temporary altar, demanding that the cypress branches that decorated it should be distributed among the crowd, just as palm fronds would be handed out at the feast of *les Rameaux* a few days later.⁷⁰ Shortly afterwards, the society acquired a bust of the Tribune for its meeting hall, where it remained in place until it was unceremoniously smashed by an outraged deputy on mission in March 1793.⁷¹ The Jacobins' Requiem was, by any standards, a sumptuous occasion, but the city's homage to Mirabeau was far from finished at that. Ten weeks after Rouen's *clubistes* had first donned their black armbands, Jean Pujoux's tableau vivant *Mirabeau à son lit de mort* was staged in one of the city's theatres 'avec le plus grand succès.'⁷² It had opened in Paris in late May, where it enjoyed a favourable press and a reasonably successful run of twelve performances; but Pujoux's mawkish dramatisation of Mirabeau's last moments was a sensation in Rouen, provoking the most charming tears from a full house, according to one review.⁷³ The piece was performed twice, a satisfactory

⁶⁶ *Journal de Rouen et du département de la Seine-Inférieure*, No. 98, 8 April 1791, p. 475.

⁶⁷ A. M. no. 99, 9 April 1791, p. 80, E. Chardon, (ed.) *Cahiers des Procès-Verbaux des séances de la Société Populaire à Rouen (1790-1795)*, (Rouen, 1909) pp. 42-3 and *Journal de Rouen et du département de la Seine-Inférieure*, no. 98, 8 April 1791, p. 475.

⁶⁸ *Journal des Amis de la Constitution*, no. 23, 3 May 1791, p. 479.

⁶⁹ Chardon, ed. *Cahiers des Procès-Verbaux*, p. 43.

⁷⁰ *Journal de Rouen*, no. 98, 8 April 1791, p. 475 and Chardon, ed. *Cahiers des Procès-Verbaux*, p. 43.

⁷¹ Chardon, ed. *Cahiers des Procès-Verbaux*, p. 112.

⁷² *Journal de Rouen*, no. 171, 20 June 1791, p. 826.

⁷³ For an effusive Parisian review, see A. M. no. 147, 27 May 1791, p. 498. For its reception in Rouen, see the *Journal de Rouen*, no. 171, 20 June 1791, p. 826.

achievement in a town where the potential audience for sentimental melodrama was slight, but in contrast, the religious observances that had begun with the Requiem on the 7th of April continued for months on end.

In the days and weeks that followed the Jacobins' Requiem, the makeshift shrine in Notre Dame became a virtual site of pilgrimage as trade corporations, Guards' battalions, and groups from neighbouring towns converged on the cathedral to hear masses said for Mirabeau.⁷⁴ Week after week, processions of printers, watchmakers, cobblers, plasterers, potters, dyers, shipwrights, masons, carpenters, shopkeepers, wine-merchants, butchers, barrowmen and labourers gathered to give thanks to the 'père de la liberté' and to pray for the repose of his soul.⁷⁵ The movement soon branched out into the city's parish churches, where an even wider variety of 'passive citizens' began to build their own short-lived shrines in honour of the Tribune.⁷⁶ Even the most disenfranchised of groups, women and the young, joined in this massive outpouring of grief. The 'jeunesse' of neighbouring Oissel celebrated their own mass in late April, as did the laundry-women of the parish of Saint-Séver on the left bank of the city, inviting the Jacobins to attend, but organising and funding the service for themselves.⁷⁷ This cascade of sorrow continued unabated for three months and with the exception of those two melancholy nights in the *Théâtre des Arts*, this vast display of mourning was conceived in explicitly religious terms. As one observer remarked:

Les citoyens de tout sexe et de tous états, simples dans leurs mœurs, fermes dans leur foi, implorent la miséricorde divine, tantôt pour l'homme justement célèbre qu'elle nous a enlevé... tantôt pour l'achèvement d'une constitution.⁷⁸

Invoking divine mercy and political progress in one and the same breath, these rites express a very traditional view of the world, one where the frontier between the sacred and the profane is blurred to say the very least. It is a world where patriot *curés* routinely rounded off otherwise enlightened elegies with a baroque flourish of *memento mori*, and where messianic metaphors sprang automatically to mind for both

⁷⁴ The first to do so were the *ouvriers imprimeurs en indienne*, who organised a memorial service in the cathedral on the 11th of April. *Journal de Rouen*, no. 101, 11 April 1791, p. 490.

⁷⁵ *Journal de Rouen*, no. 161, 10 June 1791, p. 780.

⁷⁶ In June, a bust of Mirabeau formed the focal point of a solemn liturgy and oath-taking ceremony organised by the pottery workers of St. Séver. *Journal de Rouen*, no. 163, 12 June 1791, p. 789.

⁷⁷ *Journal de Rouen*, no. 111, 21 April, p. 545 and no. 163, 12 June, p. 789.

⁷⁸ *Journal de Rouen*, no. 161, 10 June 1791, p. 779.

orators and audiences.⁷⁹ It is a world where an oath sworn on the 'cendres sacrées de Mirabeau' was both a touchstone of *civisme* and a plea for intercession, and where the difference between a relic and a souvenir is simply too ambiguous for the historian to distinguish without presumption.⁸⁰

Rouen's response to the death of Mirabeau was impressive, but similar scenes took place throughout the kingdom that spring. Right across France, Jacobin clubs, sometimes following the lead of the mother society, but more often acting on their own initiative, threw themselves into organising their own elaborate funeral services. In Verdun, a local patriot priest, father Sommelier led a vast procession in 'morne silence' through the town for a requiem in his parish church on the 13th of April. There, a massive 'sarcophage ou mausolée', decorated in black crêpe and tricolour ribbons and surrounded by candelabra, awaited the tearful worshippers. It had taken the *clubistes* a full week to prepare for the service, but the sheer size of the congregation, 'un grand nombre des citoyens de tous sexes et de tous ages', was gratifying reward for their efforts.⁸¹ Troyes' Jacobins were even more extravagant in their grief. Their catafalque stood some twenty feet high, and bore a particularly thrilling inscription: 'À la voix de Mirabeau, tombe l'Aristocratie et s'élève la Liberté', and their colleagues in St. Emillion were just as emphatic in their tributes to 'celui qui a contribué le plus à vaincre le despotisme et à renverser la tyrannie.'⁸² The Jacobins of Le Donjon in the Allier held another mass with virtually identical props, while the *clubistes* of Colmar, sensitive to the religious tensions that gripped the Haut-Rhin that Spring, went one better and staged separate services for their Catholic and Protestant members.⁸³ Predictably, Aix and Marseilles were particularly zealous. Mirabeau had been elected by both cities in the spring of 1789, but Marseilles undoubtedly trumped its local rival by staging three different ceremonies in the space of as many days.⁸⁴ Not to be outdone, the townsfolk of Aix were so overcome with

⁷⁹ See, for example, curé Guineau's funeral oration in the *Adresse de la Municipalité de Montargis*, A. N. C131, no. 462.

⁸⁰ *Journal de Rouen*, no. 161, 10 June 1791, p. 780.

⁸¹ Address from the society of Verdun, A. N. C131.

⁸² *Courrier des 83 départements*, 9 April 1791, p. 134 and *Adresse de la Société des Amis de la Constitution de la ville de St. Emillion*, A. N. C131.

⁸³ *Extrait du registre de la Société des Amis de la Constitution de la ville du Donjon*, A. N. C131, and P. Leuilliot, (ed.) *Les Jacobins de Colmar: Procès-Verbaux des séances de la Société Populaire (1791-1795)*, (Strasbourg, 1923) p. 23.

⁸⁴ Kennedy, *The Jacobin Club of Marseilles*, p. 92.

grief that the municipality set up a 'vase lacrymatoire' to receive the abundant tears of the faithful.⁸⁵

Well over two hundred clubs eventually notified the Assembly of their commemorative endeavours, but this was only a fraction of a much larger phenomenon. The press carried reports of masses for the repose of Mirabeau's soul throughout the spring and well into the summer, and some clubs were still paying their respects in the autumn. The Jacobins of Bayonne, for example, sent no word to Paris, but they nevertheless got round to ceremonially unveiling their own bust of the Tribune in late September.⁸⁶ However, it was not only the Jacobins who grieved for Mirabeau. All over France, *départements*, municipal authorities, National Guardsmen and scores of associations joined in honouring his memory too. On April 17, for example, the Guardsmen of Châtillon-sur-Seine marched in 'morne et religieux silence' to the Church of Saint-Nicolas for a mass for 'le repose de l'âme de Honoré Riquetti Mirabeau', before rounding off the solemnities with a deafening salvo of musket fire.⁸⁷ In Avallon, the arrival of a bust of 'l'immortel Mirabeau' in the Jacobin club prompted even more spectacular scenes when a contingent of pike-wielding *citoyennes* descended on the club, promising manfully to 'soutenir de tout notre courage, de toutes nos facultés le grand œuvre de notre Révolution.'⁸⁸ Elsewhere, the municipality of Sezanne, perhaps inspired by Paris' decision to re-christen the rue Chaussée-d'Antin, re-named one of its streets after Mirabeau; while Aix proudly trumpeted its status as 'le berceau de sa famille' to account for its decision to put up a statue in his honour.⁸⁹

Aix was not alone in its desire to raise a monument to Mirabeau, although its macabre plan to place his heart at the centre of the city's memorial was probably unique. The Jacobins of La Rochelle opened up a public subscription for another statue in the belief that 'ces monuments dispersés dans diverses parties de la France seraient autant

⁸⁵ *Proclamation du Corps Municipal d'Aix*, A. N. C131.

⁸⁶ J. Pontet, 'Les Amis de la Constitution de Bayonne', *Annales du Midi*, no. 208, (1994) pp. 425-50, p. 443.

⁸⁷ Letter of the 18th of April, A. N. C131.

⁸⁸ *Discours des citoyennes d'Avallon armées de piques aux Amis de la Constitution lors de l'installation du buste de Mirabeau...*, B. N. Lb40/2511, p. 2.

⁸⁹ *Journal des Amis de la Constitution*, no. 24, 10 May 1791, pp. 502 and no. 22, 26 April 1791, p. 400.

de points de ralliement pour les amis de hommes et de la patrie.⁹⁰ Such sentiments attest to the power that Revolutionaries invested in such symbolic gestures, but most such schemes were overtaken by a combination of parsimony and political circumstance and the promised statues were never raised.⁹¹ The more affordable plaster bust or engraving was, however, a different matter. Mirabeau had long furnished enterprising artists and artisans with subject matter for a wide array of patriotic bric-à-brac ranging from cheap curios bearing his portrait to Wedgwood's exclusive collection of cameos in blue and white jasper, but in April, the artistic community seized on the commercial potential of his death with almost indecent haste.⁹² On the 22nd, Houdon accompanied his gift of a bust of Mirabeau to the Assembly with the magnanimous declaration that:

consacrer mon ciseau aux grands hommes qui ont servi et illustre ma patrie, telle a été mon ambition constante; la récompense des mes travaux est l'estime de mes concitoyens.⁹³

With an international reputation to sustain his efforts, Houdon may well have been satisfied with the lively applause these sentiments inspired, but the lesser lights of the artistic community were looking for more tangible rewards, and they would not be disappointed. With prices to suit most pockets, Parisian sculptors such as Lucas, Dumont and Tessier were kept busy for months to come as orders for commemorative busts flooded in from clubs and town halls across the country.⁹⁴ The Jacobins of Florac in the Lozère placed their order for a bust of Mirabeau in late April, declaring self-importantly that 'la vue de son image nous rappellera continuellement le souvenir de ses discours' and their expectation was widely shared.⁹⁵ The *clubistes* of Bourges, Avallon, Villeneuve-le-Roy, Rouen, Bayonne and countless other towns shared the same faith in the inspirational powers of a plaster bust and placed their own orders accordingly.⁹⁶ By the end of the summer, a bust of the Tribune had become an

⁹⁰ *Journal des Amis de la Constitution*, no. 22, 26 April 1791, p. 400.

⁹¹ The Paris Jacobins manfully applauded the *Société Encyclopédique's* suggestion for a monument on the Champ de Mars, but as *Le Lendemain* noted they seemed rather less enthused by the prospect of paying for it. Aulard, *Jacobins*, vol. ii, p. 302.

⁹² Mirabeau was only one of several leading revolutionaries to be afforded this honour by Wedgwood. For these items, see the British Museum exhibition catalogue edited by D. Bindman, *The Shadow of the Guillotine: Britain and the French Revolution*, (London, 1989) pp. 96-101. There are fifty engravings concerning Mirabeau from 1789 alone in the collections of the Bibliothèque Nationale.

⁹³ A. P. vol. xxv, p. 239. For the enthusiastic applause that greeted Houdon's address, see the *Patriote Français*, no. 624, 24 April 1791, p. 443.

⁹⁴ Lucas' prices ranged from 1 to 3 *louis*. At 18 *livres* apiece, Tessier's busts, had the advantage of greater authenticity, having been allegedly modelled from Mirabeau's death mask. A. M. no. 95, 5 April 1791, p. 34, and no. 102, 12 April 1791, p. 103.

⁹⁵ A. N., C131, letter of the 21st of April, 1791.

⁹⁶ For Bourges, see *Journal des Amis de la Constitution*, no. 25, 17 mai 1791, p. 544, for Avallon, see

indispensable accessory in Jacobin circles, but the market for such mementos extended well beyond the comfortable confines of the club network to embrace an extremely wide, if not especially discerning, public. From poor quality prints depicting his last moments to cheap crockery decorated with the device 'Pleurons la perte de Mirabeau', the death of the Tribune triggered an explosion of entrepreneurial activity in studios and workshops all over Paris.⁹⁷ For the politically minded craftsman with an eye to popular demand, the market in Revolutionary memory had opened up a world of commercial possibilities.

Much, if not all, of France seems to have agreed with Brissot's verdict: 'Mirabeau n'est plus... Il faut écarter de sa tombe les reproches qu'on peut lui faire. Couvrons d'un voile ses fautes et ne jetons que des fleurs sur son cadavre.'⁹⁸ A widespread and sincere desire to honour the memory of the Tribune had momentarily brought the entire Revolutionary community together, temporarily obliterating social and political tensions and uniting the nation in a common will to remember. Given the steady decline in Mirabeau's reputation since the heady days of 1789, the public's generous response to his death is little short of remarkable. However, this nation-wide torrent of processions and services, of donations made and mementos purchased is all the more striking given the embarrassing failure of the Jacobin campaign to raise money for David's *Serment du Jeu de Paume*. The contrasting fate of these two different essays in commemoration is instructive. In many respects, they sprang from the same well of ideas: the same respect for the legislator as an almost messianic figure, the same desire to celebrate the heroes and events of the Revolution, and the same faith in the ability of the arts to furnish 'une grande leçon' in the ways of virtue. And yet, while clubs and municipalities all over France mourned Mirabeau with an extravagant attention to detail, fewer than 600 *sociétaires* could be found to sign up for David's

Discours des citoyennes d'Avallon armées de piques..., for Villeneuve le Roy, see 'La Société des "Amis de la Constitution" de Villeneuve le Roy (1790-1792) Résumé analytique des Procès-Verbaux de ses séances', par M. G. Prévost, *Bulletin de la Société des sciences historiques et naturelles de l'Yonne*, vol. 67, (1913) pp. 465-525, pp. 493 and 515. For Rouen, Chardon, ed. *Cahiers des Procès-Verbaux*, p. 112, and for Bayonne, J. Pontet, 'Les Amis de la Constitution de Bayonne', p. 443.

⁹⁷ Although it is not always possible to date the publication of these prints exactly, well over forty engravings relating to Mirabeau appeared in the immediate aftermath of his death. While several were quite elaborate works, many more were very crude efforts and were clearly destined for a popular market. Similarly, his portrayal on a variety of what Fairchild has described as 'populuxe products' such as the slipware service referred to above from the Musée Carnavalet's collection suggests an equally wide ranging clientele.

⁹⁸ *Le Patriote Française*, no. 603, 3 April 1791, p. 355.

inexpensive celebration of 'ce tiers état... fondateur de la liberté'.⁹⁹ For Bordes, the failure of the Jacobins' subscription drive can best be explained by the *clubistes'* reluctance to invest in such an ambitious project without any guarantee of a return, a reluctance that would prove well justified in the long run.¹⁰⁰ There is undoubtedly some truth in this. The Jacobins of 1791 were, after all, practical men; businessmen and professionals, for whom the dictum *caveat emptor* may well have outweighed the pathos of Dubois-Crancé's appeal, but the usefulness of this explanation has its limits. However convenient it might seem, the old chestnut of provincial parsimony is not enough to account for the Jacobins' failure to raise the revenue required for David's painting because money was spent, and spent lavishly, in honouring Mirabeau. The imposing catafalques of Verdun and Troyes, the generous collections for the poor in Rouen and the countrywide scramble to purchase busts and souvenirs of the Tribune do not rest easily with Bordes' account of penny-pinching provincials. On the contrary, the differing fates of David's project and the celebration of Mirabeau's memory might be better explained as a question of differing political and cultural priorities.

In part, the public's contrasting reactions to these different ways of honouring the memory of the deputy was simply a reflection of Mirabeau's extraordinary personal prestige. His sheer charisma conferred a symbolic focus on the commemorative process that David's more diffuse celebration of Revolutionary virtue could never hope to match. On a more personal level, signing up for an engraving of David's painting was a worthy gesture, but it lacked both the intimacy and the deeply felt sense of emotional involvement that organising and attending a requiem mass entailed. However, there were other more pressing reasons why many provincial Jacobins preferred to invest their time and money in paying their respects to Mirabeau's memory rather than subscribing to a scheme that might only bear fruit in the distant future. Above all, dispatching a subscription to the rue St. Honoré conferred no immediate political benefit on a political class sorely in need of an occasion to enhance its crumbling moral authority. Many Jacobins may have sincerely lamented the death of the 'Démosthenes Français', but with the religious crisis in full swing, few can have regretted such a timely opportunity to celebrate the

⁹⁹ Chénier, *Le Jeu de Paume*, in A. Chénier, *Œuvres Complètes*, (Paris, 1958 ed.) pp. 167-78, p. 169.

¹⁰⁰ Bordes, *Le Serment du Jeu de Paume*, p. 51.

much coveted, but increasingly elusive, marriage of revolutionary will and clerical influence.¹⁰¹

Facing, for the first time, widespread opposition, the Revolution stood accused of overthrowing the Church, and it was the need to counter these charges that defined the provincial response to the death of Mirabeau. Religion had always played a prominent part in the provincial elite's rites of memory, but in 1791, it was more important than ever that the parish church and the town hall be seen as the *alpha* and *omega* of Revolutionary ritual.¹⁰² Very rarely, as in Pau for example, the *clubistes* opted for the *autel de la patrie* as the venue for a conspicuously civic *éloge*, but in the spring of 1791, Pau's lonely gesture was the exception rather than the rule.¹⁰³ Shunning the wide, open spaces that had characterised the federations, the vast majority of these rites returned instead to the traditional symbolic centre of the town, the cathedral or the parish church, in an attempt to reinforce the increasingly precarious foundations of Revolutionary authority with the time-honoured *gravitas* of the Church. Just as the *ancien régime* civic procession had allied the sacred and the secular in a ritualised demonstration of the social hierarchy, so the funeral march of Jacobins, Guardsmen and municipal bigwigs was now designed to impress an all too fractious populace with the solemn majesty of Revolutionary power. A new array of busts, banners and slogans might have tempered the proven routine of the procession, but the overall effect remained reassuringly familiar, even if it was adapted to meet the demands of the Revolutionary moment.

That moment called, first and foremost, for a fresh injection of legitimacy into the faltering Revolutionary project, and provincial Jacobins took full advantage of Mirabeau's death in order to validate their rule before an increasingly suspicious populace. The accolades were effusive, but as often as not, they were accompanied by thundering denunciations of the fanaticism that now threatened the peaceful exercise of bourgeois rule in the provinces. Ridiculing the new enemy within, the

¹⁰¹ *Éloge civique d'Honoré Mirabeau, représentant de la Nation française, mort à Paris l'an 1791, par J. B. Milhaud, secrétaire de la Société des Hommes de la Nature*, (Aurillac, s.d.) p. 6.

¹⁰² The public ceremonies of Roche's provincial academies invariably began and ended with prayers and religious services, while a particularly Catholic version of the good death continued to figure prominently in provincial academic elegies. Roche, *Le Siècle des Lumières en Province*, vol. i, p. 131, and vol. ii, p. 211.

¹⁰³ *Procès-verbal de cette cérémonie lugubre...*, A. N., C131.

refractory priest and his misguided acolytes, the ludicrous 'femmes fanatiques', may have struck a slightly jarring note among the tearful tributes, but it helped rally the faint-hearted, and justified the accompanying vow to 'poursuivre jusqu'au dernier fois tous les factieux, tous les ennemis de la patrie.'¹⁰⁴ Yet, while these sombre rites bolstered the provincial elite's sense of solidarity, they also constituted an impeccably devout rebuff to the refractories' vituperative allegations of crypto-Protestantism. Few sights and sounds were as redolent of religious orthodoxy as a funeral procession accompanied by the dolorous tolling of church bells, and in this, the clubs saw no need to innovate. The proper forms were ruthlessly observed; indeed, an almost baroque extravagance was the norm as the *sociétaires* seized upon the commemoration of Mirabeau's memory in an unequivocal attempt to persuade an apprehensive public that neither the beliefs nor the rites of the Church were threatened by the new dispensation. All the tried and tested conventions were adhered to because convention was reassuring: it encouraged flagging spirits and contradicted the doubters, but above all, it proclaimed the permanence of the new régime.

Simultaneously designed to console the faithful and cajole the recalcitrant, these rites had another, wider audience in mind as well. To commemorate the heroes of the Revolution on a suitably grand scale offered a plausible means of restoring a town's reputation for political probity in the face of often-embarrassing evidence to the contrary, and the clubs made the most of their extravagant dedication to Mirabeau's memory. Towns where the rejection of the clerical oath might have given rise to suspicion in Paris compensated for their clergy's transgressions with a constant stream of declarations of Revolutionary integrity, hoping perhaps to persuade the authorities of their good faith through the sheer force of repetition. The revolutionaries of refractory Toulouse, where the virtuous were a decided minority, hastened to acquaint the Assembly with their vow to 'professer les principes de Mirabeau et... d'embrasser de nouveau son cœur,' while their colleagues in equally schismatic Florac declared themselves 'électrisés par le feu de son Génie.'¹⁰⁵ Others preferred to emphasise the scale and sincerity of their celebrations as indisputable

¹⁰⁴ For a typical attack on the troubles caused by 'quelques prêtres ridiculements factieux et quelques femmes fanatiques' see the address concerning Mirabeau from the Jacobins of Villeneuve in the Lot-et-Garonne. *Journal des Amis de la Constitution*, no. 26, 24 May 1791, p. 584.

¹⁰⁵ *Adresse de la Société des Amis de la Constitution de Toulouse*, May 3, 1791, and *Extraite du registre des délibérations de la municipalité de Florac*, A. N. C131.

evidence of their devotion to the Revolutionary cause. The Jacobins of Caen, where barely one in five priests had taken the oath, wrote to the mother society describing a vast throng spilling out of their *service funèbre* in the church of St. Étienne, while their colleagues in bitterly divided Colmar boasted of even graver crowd control problems during their service, so great was the townsfolk's ardour.¹⁰⁶ Such numbers bespoke true revolutionary zeal, and so did the copious tears that flowed in Brive, where the requiem for Mirabeau was interrupted by the unrestrained '*gemissements et des larmes de tous les bons citoyens.*'¹⁰⁷ Equally bitter tears were shed in towns right across the kingdom, and many were genuine, but many also masked a desperate exercise in self-justification on the part of a troubled Jacobin elite.

Mirabeau's death afforded provincial Jacobins an unexpected chance to put on a impressive display of Revolutionary unity, but it was not only the secular authorities who availed of these innumerable funeral services for their own purposes. In the largely refractory Calvados, Honfleur's very pointed insistence that '*tout le clergé*' had attended the town's memorial service was a proud claim, but it also suggests that the officiating clergy had as much to gain from these rites as the laity.¹⁰⁸ In January, the Jacobins had embraced their *curés* with open arms when they took their oaths, but as the spring wore on the suspicions that had initially been confined to non-jurors slowly began to implicate the clergy as a whole. Montargis in the Loiret is a case in point. The district's record on the oath was second to none; 98% of its priests had signed up to the Civil Constitution, but despite this near unanimity, Montargis' Jacobins remained wary of their priests.¹⁰⁹ Heirs perhaps to the scepticism that had drafted the town's exceptionally anticlerical *cahier* in 1789, the *clubistes*' reaction to the religious crisis in 1791 barely distinguished between the constitutional clergy and their refractory rivals.¹¹⁰ 'Un serment, they insisted that February, ne suffit pas,

¹⁰⁶ *Journal des Amis de la Constitution*, no. 21, 19 April 1791, and Leuillot, *Les Jacobins de Colmar*, pp. 22-3. Tensions had been running high in Colmar for some time prior to this service following riots provoked by the oath a few weeks earlier, D. M. G. Sutherland, *France 1789-1815: Revolution and Counterrevolution*, (London, 1989) p. 116.

¹⁰⁷ For Brive, see the municipality's address in A. N. C131.

¹⁰⁸ *Procès-verbal du service funèbre célébré à Honfleur en mémoire de Honoré Riquetti Mirabeau*, A. N. C131. In similar vein, the Guardsmen of Louviers (Eure) boasted that '*un clergé nombreuse et entièrement constitutionnel*' had attended the town's memorial service on May 3rd. *Journal de Rouen*, no. 125, 5 May 1791, p. 606.

¹⁰⁹ For the oath in Montargis, see Tackett, *Religion, Revolution and Regional Culture*, p. 336.

¹¹⁰ With a list of demands ranging from the suppression of religious orders with no obvious '*objet d'utilité public*' and the abolition of plurality of benefices to the extension of full civil and political

surtout de ceux qui ont l'habitude indiscrete de faire des vœux', and additional displays of loyalty, up to and even including marriage, were soon required of the resident clergy.¹¹¹ In this climate of fear and mistrust, the desire to strike the right note could easily become exaggerated, and the unrestrained adulation of *curé* François Guineau's elegy of 'le véritable ami du peuple' must be read accordingly. His extravagant enthusiasm for 'l'immortel' Mirabeau's memory might not have furnished any of the 'fruits de l'hymen' that the *clubistes* now expected of their clergy, but it may, at least, have allayed some of their suspicions about his patriotism.¹¹²

If the clergy of such irreproachable regions felt the need for ostentation in these matters, then it is hardly surprising that priests marooned in districts with less satisfactory reputations felt obliged to go even further. It was in precisely such refractory citadels as Colmar, Toulouse, or Loudéac in Brittany that the constitutional priest had most reason to trumpet his attachment to the Revolution with a stirring sermon or an eye-catching display of commemorative zeal. Facing dwindling congregations, branded an apostate by his *confrères* and worse by many of his parishioners, the increasingly isolated juror was forced to rely on the good will of the authorities for a living, for moral support and, very often, for protection. Under these circumstances, anxiety to proclaim one's Revolutionary credentials and a desire to distance oneself from refractory opinion were powerful motives, particularly when set against a backdrop of mounting mistrust. Certainly, many clerics genuinely admired the Tribune as a patriot, but more than a few must have recoiled from the *abbé* Cerutti's messianic analogy, especially when echoes of Mirabeau's colourful past still reverberated in the press. Widely reported tales of actresses and orgies doubtless gave some clergymen pause for thought, but in the spring of 1791, pragmatism frequently

rights to non-Catholics, the *cahier* composed by Montargis' third estate was one of the most radical on religious matters written anywhere in the kingdom. A. P. vol. iv, pp. 26-32, esp. pp. 28 and 30.

¹¹¹ To be accepted fully into the Revolutionary community, the club insisted that priests must be seen to abjure the errors of the past by openly renouncing intolerance and discouraging popular superstition. Ultimately, marriage and fatherhood, or as the *clubistes* delicately put it, surrendering 'aux doux penchans de la nature' and harvesting the 'fruits de l'hymen' was all that would convince the society of the clergy's regeneration. 'Extrait d'une lettre de la société des amis de la constitution de Montargis', *Le Patriote Français*, no. 564, 23 February 1791, p. 196.

¹¹² For Guineau's eulogy in the church of Saint-Germain, see the *Adresse de la Municipalité de Montargis*, A. N. C131, no. 462.

outweighed principle. Reputations were won or lost on such matters and the right reputation might furnish some security against an ever more uncertain future.

For all the solemn processions, sacred oaths and abundant tears, Desmoulins' suggestion that 'la curiosité, la politique et l'ostentation de civisme avait grossi immensément le cortège' was probably just as true of these provincial pieties as it had been of the original funeral in Paris.¹¹³ Almost all of these rites responded, at least in part, to the dictates of political convenience, and the mourners combined enlightened rhetoric with enlightened self-interest in equal measure. Just as the need to defuse the threat posed by Marat's conspiracy theories had helped shape the Assembly's dazzling, but ultimately bogus, display of unity on April 4th, so the desire to counter the effects of the religious crisis weighed heavily on the minds of the *sociétaires* and *fonctionnaires* who bestowed such bountiful attention on Mirabeau's memory. However, if opportunism inevitably played its part, adding a sense of urgency to the procession and an edge to the eulogy, it is not enough, in itself, to account for all of the masses said for the repose of Mirabeau's soul. To commemorate in 1791 served a much wider variety of purpose than this; a variety ill served by those who look on Revolutionary ritual as a drearily single-minded attempt to 'refaire l'unité.'¹¹⁴ The commemoration of Mirabeau's memory points instead towards a much more vivid and variegated cultural experience, a domain where sincere feelings of grief, respect and a sense of religious responsibility towards the memory of 'notre guide et notre modèle' mingled with the pressing demands of local and national *realpolitik*.¹¹⁵ A complex interplay of sympathy, statecraft and a sense of the sacred defined both the form and content of these rites. It determined that the field of the Federation was no longer an appropriate festive space, and decreed that the showy tricolour should cede to the sombre apparel of mourning, but above all, it dictated the recourse to church and cleric, because death imposed a sacred duty to mourn, and because politics imposed a no less pressing obligation to commemorate.

¹¹³ *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 72, p. 325.

¹¹⁴ Ozouf, *La Fête Révolutionnaire*, p. 469.

¹¹⁵ Address from the departmental authorities of the Loiret, A. M. no. 99, 9 April 1791, p. 80.

The death and remembrance of Mirabeau afforded Revolutionaries a brief respite during an increasingly torrid spring, but despite these ostentatious displays of patriotic resolve, the problem of the clerical oath continued to rumble on with no resolution in sight. If anything, the situation just went from bad to worse. In Paris, refractory masses were broken up by angry mobs, and nuns were whipped through the streets by outraged *citoyennes* after refusing to recognise their new constitutional chaplains.¹¹⁶ An already volatile situation deteriorated further during Easter week, when the royal family was prevented from leaving the capital to hear Mass performed by a non-juror in Saint-Cloud. However, it was the publication of *Quod aliquantum* on 4 May that finally brought matters to a head. News of the pope's categorical repudiation of the Revolution seriously undermined the Assembly's attempts to reach a compromise with the refractory clergy and even prompted many priests to retract their oaths.¹¹⁷ The deputies were appalled by the papacy's sense of timing: radical opinion was outraged and conservatives gloomily predicted a complete 'scission' in the months ahead, but more immediately, the papal brief provoked uproar in the capital.¹¹⁸ On the evening of its publication, an effigy of Pius VI was paraded through the city to the Palais Royal where it was set alight, with a copy of the offending text in its hands and the slogan 'fanatisme et guerre civile' emblazoned on its richly decorated vestments.¹¹⁹ Such public indignities were serious enough in themselves, but Gorsas' well-publicised *auto-da-fé* only served to exacerbate the mounting sense of crisis. By the end of the month, diplomatic relations between Paris and Rome had broken down completely, and nuncio Dugnani was recalled from France.¹²⁰ The Revolution and the Catholic Church were now in open conflict, and quite suddenly, the memory of Voltaire was back on the political agenda.

In the midst of this deepening crisis, the Assembly set in train the legislative process that would carry Voltaire's body back from its ignominious resting place in a ruined

¹¹⁶ For a vivid description of these scenes, see C. Guittard de Floriban, *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris sous la Révolution*, R. Aubert, (ed.) (Paris, 1974) p. 41.

¹¹⁷ Although originally issued in March, Rome's rejection of the Civil Constitution in *Quod aliquantum* did not become public knowledge until it was included in Pius VI's brief, *Caritas quae*, in late April. For the *Comité Ecclésiastique's* attempts to reach an accommodation with non-jurors during the spring, see Tackett, *Religion, Revolution and Regional Culture*, p. 27.

¹¹⁸ For Ferrières' prediction, see his letter of May 6th, in Ferrières, *Correspondance Inédite*, p. 337.

¹¹⁹ Guittard de Floriban, *Journal d'un Bourgeois*, p. 51.

¹²⁰ The crisis was provoked by the Vatican's refusal to accept the Assembly's nominee to replace Cardinal de Bernis as French ambassador to the Holy See. A. Latreille, *L'Église Catholique et la Révolution Française*, vol. i, p. 100.

country abbey to a place of honour in the newly established Panthéon. Reports that Voltaire's burial place in the now nationalised abbey of Sellières was up for sale were the ostensible cause of concern, but this was hardly news, and the Assembly's sudden interest in the fate of Voltaire's corpse seems inextricably bound up with the publication of *Quod aliquantum* just a few days earlier.¹²¹ With all hopes of reaching a compromise with the Holy See now dashed, the deputies suddenly found themselves facing into a new crusade against *l'infâme*, and who better to serve as standard-bearer for that crusade than Voltaire. Thus, on 8 May, the liberal deputy, Regnaud de Saint-Jean-d'Angély, ascended the tribune to demand that the *philosophes'* remains be returned post-haste to Paris for a state funeral in the Panthéon. Voltaire, he declared, had 'repoussé le fanatisme' and 'éclairé l'ignorance' and recognition for these achievements was long overdue.¹²² Despite attempts to adjourn the debate, Jean-Baptiste Treilhard, a prominent Jansenist deputy and one of the architects of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, immediately seconded Regnaud's proposal. Insisting that Voltaire had predicted the revolution, he declared that 'c'est donc à lui que nous la devons et il est peut-être un des premiers pour lesquels nous devons les honneurs.'¹²³ Treilhard might well hail Voltaire as 'l'auteur d'une révolution aussi belle, aussi grand que la notre', but many of his colleagues were appalled at this alleged ancestry, and the debate that ensued was more than usually vicious. Several moderates reacted with dismay to Regnaud's suggestion, but their conservative colleagues were positively apoplectic, with one even suggesting that if Voltaire was indeed a prophet then his remains should be dispatched to Palestine.¹²⁴ Despite the right's energetic rear-guard action, Regnaud's motion was carried by a substantial majority, and the matter was referred to committee to prepare for the corpse's stately homecoming. Voltaire would return to Paris, but the harmony that had accompanied Mirabeau to the grave just a few weeks earlier had given way to bitter recriminations.

The deputies' controversial decision to incorporate Voltaire into the Revolutionary Panthéon is even more surprising given the distinct lack of enthusiasm they had

¹²¹ A. M. no. 130, 10 May 1791, p. 346. As we shall see, Voltaire's nephew, the marquis de Villette had been issuing dire warnings concerning the sale of the Sellières site for over a year.

¹²² A. M. no. 130, 10 May 1791, p. 346.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Regnault's scheme divided the *Comité Ecclésiastique* straight down the middle. While Treilhard eagerly endorsed the idea, Lanjuinais was the first to attempt to put off the discussion. This sarcastic suggestion came from the former Jesuit, Couturier. A. M., no. 130, 10 May 1791, p. 346.

shown any similar initiatives in the past. For the last two years, admirers of Voltaire had made repeated attempts to draw the Assembly's attention to the Revolution's debt to the *philosophe*, demanding that the nation avenge his final humiliation at the hands of archbishop Beaumont with an appropriate show of appreciation. In September 1789, Charles Palissot, perhaps eager to repair his tarnished reputation as the author of *Les Philosophes*, had sought the legislature's permission to dedicate a new edition of Voltaire's works to the National Assembly. Despite assurances that the collection would be carefully bowdlerised, the deputies tactfully declined Palissot's offer after Henri Grégoire and archbishop Juigné had expressed the clergy's hostility to the plan in no uncertain terms.¹²⁵ This was only the first of several such schemes, but the *Chronique de Paris*' repeated calls for a state funeral and Anarchasis Cloots' demands that the Assembly acknowledge the nation's debt to 'notre véritable rédempteur' all met with the same withering indifference.¹²⁶ These suggestions aside, the main impetus behind the drive to honour Voltaire came from the great man's friend and adopted son-in-law, the Marquis Charles de Villette. Villette had nominated himself custodian of the philosophic flame after Voltaire had obligingly died in his house on the quai des Théâtins, and from May 1790 onwards, he devoted himself to a campaign to redress 'la honte' of Voltaire's continued exile from Paris with a state funeral in Sainte-Geneviève.¹²⁷

For all his persistence, Villette's one-man crusade remained a dead letter until November 1790 when *Brutus* was revived at the *Comédie Française*.¹²⁸ The production was controversial; many took exception to its apparent glorification of regicide, but it marked a turning point in Voltaire's fortunes on the Revolutionary stage, heralding a new interest in his work that lasted until well into 1793.¹²⁹ More

¹²⁵ A. M. no. 65, 25 September 1789, pp. 510-1.

¹²⁶ See for example, Fréteau de Saint-Just's proposal in the *Chronique de Paris*, no. xli, 3 October 1789, p. 163, Villette's letter to the same paper on the 21st of December 1789, no. 119, p. 478, and Cloots' proposal of the 27th of May 1790, in A. Cloots, *Écrits Révolutionnaires*, (Paris, 1979) p. 25.

¹²⁷ Heir to the chateau at Ferney, Villette had installed Voltaire's heart in 'une espèce de temple' there, according to Mme. de Genlis. His campaign began with a letter in the *Chronique de Paris* on May 30th, 1790. Genlis, *Mémoires*, vol. iii, p. 299, and C. de Villette, *Lettres Choisis de Charles de Villette sur les principaux évènements de la Révolution*, (Paris, 1792) pp. 62-7.

¹²⁸ *Corr. Litt.* vol. xvi, November 1790, pp. 115-7.

¹²⁹ For the royalist demonstrations that attended the revival of *Brutus*, see La Harpe's comments on the 17 of December 1790, in Aulard, *Jacobins*, vol. i, p. 416. Prior to this revival, Voltaire's works had been performed on a paltry 48 occasions throughout 1790. Thereafter, it became almost impossible to escape Voltaire on the Parisian stage. His plays were staged 198 times during 1791, and this popularity continued into 1792, with 161 performances and 1793 with 105, but fell off dramatically thereafter,

immediately however, Villette seized on the publicity surrounding the production to re-launch his campaign. Petitions to mayor Bailly and the Jacobin club followed in quick succession, and Villette even took to the stage during the play's third performance to demand 'au nom de la patrie' that Voltaire be immediately given a state funeral in Paris.¹³⁰ This spectacular *coup de théâtre* was widely publicised, but few appear to have shared Villette's conviction that 'notre glorieuse Révolution est le fruit de ses ouvrages.'¹³¹ While Bailly and the Jacobins were vaguely sympathetic, the press was divided, and crucially, the Assembly remained deaf to his entreaties.¹³² After over a year of dogged activity, Villette's campaign had achieved nothing, and he bitterly attributed the authorities' indifference to a desire not to antagonise the clergy.¹³³ He was probably right. Ignored, rebuffed, or at best palmed off with a half-hearted promise from the Commune to look into the matter, Villette's bid to return 'le poète de la nation' to Paris appeared hopeless.¹³⁴

To make matters worse, the authorities displayed no such hesitation when confronted with similar calls to honour other, less divisive, icons of Enlightenment. Earlier that summer, the entire Assembly had joined a tearful Mirabeau in donning mourning for Benjamin Franklin, and the deputies even resolved to hang his portrait in the Assembly, where it was soon joined by a bust donated by Houdon.¹³⁵ The Commune went one better, inviting the ubiquitous *abbé* Fauchet to address a grandiose ceremony in the Rotunda of the Halle-aux-Bleds on 21 July. Fauchet's eulogy was a familiar litany of Franklin's genius as a man of science, a patriot and a benevolent sage. Acclaimed as the author of 'le catéchisme du bonheur', Franklin was, for Fauchet and to a lesser extent for Mirabeau as well, the Rousseau of the New World: a man of humble birth, precocious talent and exceptional virtue, but most of all, he

with just 43 in 1794. The above figures were compiled using the 'Parisian theatre during the French Revolution database', (University of Chicago ARTFL project)

¹³⁰ Lacroix, *Actes de la Commune*, 9 November 1790, 2e Série, vol. i, pp. 232-4.

¹³¹ Aulard, *Jacobins*, 10 November 1790, vol. i, pp. 367-9.

¹³² True to form, the *Chronique de Paris* was fulsome in its support for this new initiative, but Desmoulins was considerably more sceptical about Villette's proposal. *Chronique de Paris*, no. 316, 12 November 1790, pp. 1261-2, and *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 57, pp. 228-31.

¹³³ *Chronique de Paris*, no. 343, 9 December 1790, p. 1370.

¹³⁴ Lacroix, *Actes de la Commune*, 2e Série, vol. i, p. 233. After further pressure from Villette, the Commune appointed a two-man commission to investigate the return of Voltaire's remains to Paris in late February 1791. The commission reported in early March, but the Commune was in no hurry to act, and left the matter up to the Assembly. Lacroix, *Actes de la Commune*, 2e Série, vol. iii, p. 93.

¹³⁵ Mirabeau, 'Éloge de Franklin', *A. M.* no. 163, 12 June 1790, p. 500, and *A. M.* no. 171, 20 June 1790, p. 668.

was 'un ami de l'humanité'.¹³⁶ An exemplary model for God-fearing patriots the world over, this was a vision of the man of letters that the Revolutionary polity could unite around, far removed from the image of the fractious *philosophe* that Villette was so assiduously promoting.

As if to add insult to injury, only a month after Villette's long campaign had climaxed on stage at the *Comédie Française*, the National Assembly voted unanimously to raise a life-size statue of Rousseau in its chambers.¹³⁷ Pressure for some official recognition for Rousseau's contribution to the Revolutionary cause had been building up for some time. In January 1790, the *Révolutions de Paris* had launched a subscription drive to erect a statue in his honour, and six months later, the deputies graciously accepted Barère's gift of a bust of Jean-Jacques to join that of Franklin at the tribune.¹³⁸ However, the real driving force behind the Assembly's decision in December was the *comte* d'Eymar, a fairly anonymous deputy, but an uncommonly fervent Rousseauist.¹³⁹ Seizing the opportunity afforded by Barère's appeal for a pension for the impoverished Thérèse Levasseur, the 'veuve du législateur de l'univers', d'Eymar renewed his demand that the deputies discharge the 'dette de reconnaissance que la France doit à la mémoire de l'auteur d'Émile.'¹⁴⁰ It was their duty, he argued, to avenge the envy, persecution and calumnies that Jean-Jacques had endured, and to acknowledge his rôle in initiating 'dans nos mœurs une révolution qu'il vous était réservé d'achever.'¹⁴¹ The Assembly agreed wholeheartedly and voting unanimously to commission the proposed statue, even doubled Barère's suggested pension for Thérèse from 600 to 1,200 *livres*. The decision was widely applauded, but despite this warm welcome, the statue was never raised.¹⁴² The project soon became mired in a bitter artistic controversy pitting Houdon against the

¹³⁶ *Éloge civique de Benjamin Franklin, prononcé le 21 juillet 1790, dans la Rotonde au nom de la Commune de Paris, par M. l'abbé Fauchet*, (Paris, 1790) B. N. Lb40/1231, pp. 2 and 13.

¹³⁷ A. M. no. 397, pp. 696-7.

¹³⁸ *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 29, 30 January 1790, pp. 44-5. According to Marat, the subscription drive was a dismal failure. Marat, *Œuvres politiques*, vol. iv, p. 2580. Barère's gift was made on the 22nd of June. A. M. no. 173, p. 691.

¹³⁹ According to Desmoulins, the poetically minded Eymar was ever-present in the Assembly, 'ou on ne l'aperçoit jamais.' *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 57, p. 225.

¹⁴⁰ *Recueil des pièces relatives à la motion faite à l'Assemblée nationale, au sujet de J. J. Rousseau et de sa veuve*, (Paris, 1791) p. 6.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁴² See for example the *Proposopée de J.J. Rousseau ou Sentiments de Reconnaissance des Amis de l'Instituteur d'Émile à l'Assemblée Nationale de France, à l'occasion de son décret du 21 décembre 1790*, (Paris, 1791) or Thiery's praise for the Assembly's decision in his *Éloge de Jean-Jacques*

Commune des Arts which successive assemblies proved unwilling, or perhaps simply unable, to resolve.¹⁴³ Nevertheless, despite their inability to carry the project through to its conclusion, the deputies' decision marked a turning point in the Revolution's relationship to the past. Flanked by the busts of Rousseau and Franklin, the deputies enthusiastically endorsed the man of letters as the 'précurseur de cette grande révolution.'¹⁴⁴ In so doing, the Revolution certainly laid claim to the patrimony of the Enlightenment, but it looked to an altogether less bellicose legacy than that represented by Voltaire.

In many respects, the deputies' marked reluctance to entertain Villette's campaign was merely a reflection of the wider public's mounting lack of sympathy with both the style and the substance of the Voltairean past. Voltaire still had his admirers in the upper echelons of Salon society, but by 1789, his very proper classicism and rather desiccated deism seemed increasingly out of step with the cult of sensibility sweeping the world of letters. His tragedies were rarely seen in theatres dominated by the more demotic delights of the *drame bourgeois*, appearing only 36 times on the Parisian stage throughout 1789, and faring little better the following year.¹⁴⁵ Such are the vagaries of literary fashion, but this dip in popularity had wider implications, for it also reflected a marked re-orientation in what the public expected from its favourite authors, and what they, in turn, were prepared to do for their readers. It was, quite simply, no longer enough to turn out well-crafted verse or witty epigrams when readers followed Rousseau's *travaux* (and those of his imitators) with pulsating hearts and brimming eyes. Certainly, this ostentatious display of inner torment was not to everyone's taste, but many readers revelled in the frisson of vicarious suffering Jean-Jacques furnished. For Brissot, reading the *Confessions* in 1784 had been a heart-rending, but liberating experience:

Rousseau, (Lille, 1791) and the letter congratulating the Assembly from Geneva in A. N. C/131, no.32.

¹⁴³ The best account of this controversy is Y. Luke, 'The Politics of Participation: Quatremère de Quincy and the Theory and Practice of 'Concours Publiques in Revolutionary France 1791-1795', *The Oxford Art Journal*, vol. x, (1987) pp. 15-43.

¹⁴⁴ *Recueil des pièces relatives à la motion faite à l'Assemblée nationale, au sujet de J. J. Rousseau et de sa veuve*, (Paris, 1791) p. 7.

¹⁴⁵ To put this in context, the presentation of Voltaire's works on the stage was easily surpassed by the sentimental melodramas of such forgotten luminaries as Boutet de Monvel with 45 performances, Desfontaines with 61, or Michel Sedaine whose works were staged 87 times during 1789. This figures were compiled using the 'Parisian theatre during the French Revolution database', (University of Chicago ARTFL project)

Je souffre moi-même quand je le lis; j'entre dans ses douleurs, et je me dis: que n'ai-je été assez heureuse pour le connaître? Comme je lui aurait ouvert mon âme!' ¹⁴⁶

Manon Philipon was equally enraptured: Rousseau had 'échauffée mon âme', 'm'enflammer, m'élever et m'ennoblir.' ¹⁴⁷ Few other authors could inspire such genuine passion; Voltaire certainly did not, for all the posturing of the guests who had trooped down to Ferney to pay their ritualised respects. ¹⁴⁸ Readers might still snigger at the old rascal's *jeux d'esprit*, but they communed with Rousseau's *âme*, immersing themselves wholeheartedly in his tortured personality. 'Tout à la fois peintre et législateur du cœur humain,' Rousseau was a father confessor for a disenchanted generation. ¹⁴⁹

Faced with such fervent homage, it was inevitable that Voltaire's reputation should suffer. He still had his enthusiasts, but Rousseau had disciples, and these disciples were to be found right across the spectrum of future revolutionary opinion. For Mirabeau, the contrast between the two authors could not have been more marked:

Voltaire qui, plus que tout autre peut-être, mérita l'admiration et le mépris de ses semblables, fut au théâtre un génie du premier ordre, dans tous ses vers un grand poète, dans l'histoire de l'homme un phénomène; mais dans les ouvrages historiques et philosophiques, il n'a été le plus souvent qu'un bel-esprit, tandis que Rousseau, digne de tous nos respects par ses mœurs, son noble et inflexible courage, et la nature de ses travaux, est le dieu de l'éloquence, l'apôtre de la vertu, nous l'a toujours fait adorer, et ne prostitua jamais ses talens sublimes, ni à la satire, ni à la flatterie. ¹⁵⁰

Mme Roland's verdict was essentially the same. Reflecting on the furore that had accompanied Voltaire's return to Paris in 1778, she dismissed the sage as just another *philosophe*, undoubtedly talented, but lacking the moral integrity and passionate authenticity that was the hallmark of Rousseau's life and work. ¹⁵¹ For others, the comparison was even less flattering. In contrast to the much-loved *citoyen de*

¹⁴⁶ Brissot to Martin, October 21, 1784, cited in R. Darnton, 'The Grub Street Style of Revolution: J.-P. Brissot, Police Spy', *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 40, (1968) pp. 301-327, p. 326.

¹⁴⁷ *Lettres de Madame Roland*, Nouvelle Série, 2 vols. C. Perroud, ed. (Paris, 1913-15) vol. i, p. 392.

¹⁴⁸ The visit to Ferney had clearly established rules of conduct, which left some observers distinctly cold. As Mme de Genlis remarked: 'Il est d'usage (surtout pour les jeunes femmes) de s'émouvoir, de pâlir, de s'attendrir, et même en général de se trouver mal en apercevant M. de Voltaire; on se précipite dans ses bras, on balbutie, on pleure, on est dans un trouble qui ressemble à l'amour le plus passionné. Voilà l'étiquette de la présentation à Ferney.' *Mémoires de Madame de Genlis*, vol. ii, p. 317.

¹⁴⁹ L.-S. Mercier, *De Jean-Jacques Rousseau considéré comme l'un des premiers auteurs de la Révolution*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1791) vol. i, pp. 19-20.

¹⁵⁰ Letter of December 8th, 1778. Mirabeau, *Lettres à Sophie*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1834-5 ed.) vol. ii, p. 221.

¹⁵¹ Having conceded Voltaire's abilities 'comme homme de goût et d'esprit', she added that 'nous ne lui donnons qu'une autorité très bornée en politique et en philosophie.' *Lettres*, N. S., vol. ii, p. 211.

Genève, Voltaire could easily seem vain and insincere: at best, a sophisticated wit, at worst, a posturing charlatan. Writing in 1787, Barère extolled Rousseau as a genius 'fait pour éclairer son siècle et la postérité', but derided Voltaire as the 'ami de luxe, accoutumé à vivre avec les grands et à les flatter.'¹⁵² Four years later, Claude Fauchet was even more scornful. While he occasionally took exception with Rousseau, he denounced Voltaire relentlessly, anathematising him as an incorrigible 'menteur', a shameless sycophant, and worst of all, as 'fort aristocrate.'¹⁵³ In comparison to Jean-Jacques's well-cultivated reputation for simplicity, Voltaire's social pretensions were an easy target, but the implications of Rousseau's persecution complex proved even more damaging to Voltaire's standing. Many looked to Ferney as the epicentre of the wicked *encyclopédiste* cabal that had tormented poor Jean-Jacques, and the publication of the second part of the *Confessions* in late 1789 did little to win Voltaire fresh sympathisers in this regard.¹⁵⁴ By 1791, Voltaire's celebrity was clearly no longer what it once was. As Mercier gleefully concluded: 'la gloire de la poète semblait avoir baissé, tandis que celle de l'écrivain moral n'a fait que s'étendre.'¹⁵⁵

For many Revolutionaries, it was simply inconceivable that Voltaire could inspire anything like Robespierre's impassioned appeal to Rousseau's memory:

Homme divin! Tu m'as appris à me connaître, bien jeune, tu m'as fait apprécier la dignité de ma nature, et réfléchir aux grands principes de l'ordre social... ton exemple est là, devant mes yeux.¹⁵⁶

The intensity of Robespierre's devotion was perhaps unique, but it nevertheless supports Joan McDonald's contention that 'the Rousseauist myth had become an integral part of the common intellectual heritage of the educated classes.'¹⁵⁷ The

¹⁵² Barère, *Éloge de J. J. Rousseau, citoyen de Genève*, (Toulouse, 1787) cited in A. Monglond, *Le Prémantisme Français*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1969) vol. ii, pp. 34-5 and 223.

¹⁵³ 'Second Discours prononcé par M. Claude Fauchet à l'Assemblée de la Confédération universelle des Amis de la Vérité', in *La Bouche de Fer*, no. 7, October 1790, p. 109. Warming to his task a few weeks later, he went on to accuse Voltaire of 'les erreurs palpables, les flagorneries ministérielles, le despotisme en société comme en littérature'. *La Bouche de Fer*, no. 20, November 1790, p. 317.

¹⁵⁴ Reflecting on Rousseau's persecution in his *Charlatans Modernes*, Marat placed the blame squarely on d'Alembert and Voltaire's shoulders, even suggesting that they had fabricated some of the less praiseworthy episodes recorded in the *Confessions*. Marat, *Œuvres*, vol. vi, pp. 3369-72. Similarly, Mercier noted that Voltaire 'fut lui-même très injuste envers Rousseau', although when confronted by Rousseau's abandonment of his children, he adopted a slightly different strategy, claiming that this was merely 'une parabole.' Mercier, *Fragments de Politique et d'Histoire*, vol. ii, p. 345, and *De Jean-Jacques...*, vol. ii, p. 267.

¹⁵⁵ Mercier, *De Jean-Jacques ...*, vol. i, p. 2. See also Marat's *Charlatans Modernes*, op cit, p. 3370.

¹⁵⁶ *Dédicace aux Mânes de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, in Robespierre, *Œuvres*, vol. i, pp. 211-2.

¹⁵⁷ J. McDonald, *Rousseau and the French Revolution*, (London, 1965) p. 170.

same, of course, might be said for Voltairean anti-clericalism, and Tackett has suggested that this probably exerted a greater influence on Robespierre's colleagues than did Rousseau's much vaunted general will.¹⁵⁸ This may be so, but even if many deputies espoused Voltairean ambitions in their dealings with the Church, they rarely evoked the master's authority to endorse their position. Mindful of his reputation as a firebrand and still wary of alienating the goodwill of the *curés* who had joined them, few deputies were willing to admit their debt to Voltaire too explicitly, as their reaction to Palissot's offer bears out. Beyond the Manège, pamphleteers and polemicists were less reserved in proclaiming their allegiance, but as Galliani points out, at least half of those who looked to the sage were conservatives eager to recruit the muscular royalist of *la Henriade* to their cause.¹⁵⁹ Certainly, the same principle might be extended to Rousseau, and as Barny suggests: 'de 1788 à 1791, il n'y a pas un parti qui ne se réclame de Rousseau, qui ne s'efforce de le mobiliser à son profit.'¹⁶⁰ However, such efforts were qualitatively different from the scrappy, epigrammatic quotations that authors lifted willy-nilly from Voltaire. Those who drew on Montesquieu or Rousseau did so systematically; they looked to them as their spiritual mentors, hoping to find in their writings a coherent blueprint for reform.¹⁶¹ Diverse as it was, Voltaire's oeuvre offered no such guide to Revolutionary praxis. His elitism seemed out of place in an even half-heartedly egalitarian era, his absolutist instincts were incompatible with the guiding principles of the new order, and his sarcasm seemed better suited to dismantling the old régime than to constructing the new.¹⁶² While it might applaud his tragedies, public opinion was not yet ready to relive the conflicts that Voltaire personified. Convinced that the new dispensation had exorcised the shades of Calas and La Barre, the image of the pugnacious old *philosophe* cut a poor figure as France luxuriated in the collective embrace of the Federation. In 1790, the cynical grin of Voltaire seemed out of place.

¹⁵⁸ Tackett, *Becoming a Revolutionary*, p. 304. It might, however, be objected that Tackett defines Rousseau's influence too narrowly in this respect, and that the impact of his ethical and religious vision was considerably broader than that of his strictly political thinking.

¹⁵⁹ R. Galliani, 'Voltaire cité par les brochures de 1789', *S. V. E. C.* no. 132, (1975) pp. 17-54 and 'La Présence de Voltaire dans les brochures de 1790', *S. V. E. C.* no. 166, (1977) pp. 69-114.

¹⁶⁰ R. Barny, 'Jean-Jacques Rousseau dans la Révolution', *D. H. S.* (1974) pp. 59-98, p. 65.

¹⁶¹ Hampson's contention that the deputies shared a common political outlook 'compounded of veneration for Montesquieu and emotional attachment to Rousseau' might require some modification in the light of Tackett's more recent research, but the broad principle still seems valid. N. Hampson, *Will and Circumstance: Montesquieu, Rousseau and the French Revolution*, (London, 1983) p. 163

¹⁶² According to Mercier: 'Voltaire était encroûté de tous les préjugés aristocratiques... le peuple n'était pour lui que le parterre de la comédie française.' Mercier, *De Jean-Jacques...*, vol. ii, p. 206.

The publication of *Quod aliquantum* changed all that. After so much neglect, the deputies' earlier fears of alienating the clergy vanished in a stampede to assimilate Voltaire's reputation into the patrimony of the revolutionary generation. The timing of Regnaud's initial motion is evidence enough of this, but the sheer opportunism of this first debate became even more obvious when details for the festival were finalised three weeks later on 30 May. The task of organising the ceremony fell to the Constitutional Committee, whose *rapporteur*, Gossin, hailed Voltaire as the first to 'osa ... parler aux peuples de leurs droits,' and even more emphatically, as the 'libérateur de la pensée.'¹⁶³ The right, realising its impotence, maintained a stony silence throughout. Such reticence was uncharacteristic, but on this of all days, silence was probably the most sensible option. The Committee, with a shrewd sense of occasion, had chosen to present its report on the thirteenth anniversary of Voltaire's death, and Gossin lost no time in drawing the deputies' attention to the shameful facts of the matter. Recalling the scandalous circumstances surrounding the Church's refusal to grant the old man a Christian burial, he implored his colleagues to make amends for this cruel insult: 'la Nation a reçu l'outrage fait à ce grand homme, la Nation le réparera.'¹⁶⁴ Not content with recounting this sacerdotal act of *lèse-nation*, Gossin went on to remind his audience of another shameful episode in the history of the pre-Revolutionary Church. Emphasising the crusade against *l'infâme* as Voltaire's greatest achievement, he declared:

Voltaire a terrassé le fanatisme, dénoncé les erreurs jusqu'alors idolâtrées..., il a crié vengeance pour les Sirven et les Calas assassinés au nom de la justice, il a crié vengeance pour l'humanité entière.¹⁶⁵

The cause of Voltaire and the cause of the nation were now one and the same, but perhaps more importantly, so were their enemies, and Gossin's speech was a timely reminder of the cruelty and intolerance of the very episcopacy that now dared oppose the Civil Constitution. Regnaud seconded the motion, but if his speech was the more learned contribution, Gossin's cry for vengeance had the advantage of stark simplicity. Summoning up the bloody spectre of Calas and the cruel persecution of Voltaire, Gossin's chilling tale of clerical injustice and the martyrdom of innocence furnished the deputies with a vivid metaphor for France's current dilemma. The

¹⁶³ A. M. no. 151, 31 May 1791, pp. 536-7.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

Assembly responded appropriately, voting solemnly to rescue Voltaire's memory from the clutches of 'le fanatisme persécuteur.'¹⁶⁶ A few months earlier, the abbé Maury had warned the deputies that the Civil Constitution would create a host of new martyrs for the church.¹⁶⁷ In May 1791, the Revolution retaliated by consecrating its own.

In those two brief but acrimonious debates, the deputies recast Voltaire's life and legacy as the foundation myth of the Revolution, an epic crusade pitting liberty and truth against bigotry and fanaticism. Draping itself in this well-worn banner, the Revolution created a vision of the Enlightenment in its own image, a portrait of virtue incarnate, tormented and scorned, but ultimately vindicated. In the process, a kaleidoscopic career spanning over sixty years and encompassing every literary genre was systematically reduced to two defining moments: the *causes célèbres* of the 1760's and the final deathbed scene in which a vindictive hierarchy exercised its cruel revenge on a virtuous old man. The contrast with the *éloges* of the 1770's could not have been more marked. Whereas the Republic of Letters had celebrated its patriarch as a genius of encyclopaedic talents, the Voltaire that emerges from the Assembly's tributes is a shadowy figure, a one-dimensional cipher for the anxieties of the Revolutionary elite.¹⁶⁸ Gossin's *Rapport* was particularly pointed in this respect, but even Regnaud, the most scholarly contributor to the Assembly's debate, was not above dismissing Voltaire's achievements as poet and tragedian, savant and wit, as simply irrelevant to the matter at hand.¹⁶⁹ As a result, the Academician's once rhapsodic references to Virgil and Horace evaporated in a relentless drive to re-invent Voltaire as an enthusiastic Revolutionary *avant la lettre*. Admittedly, few went quite as far as Villette, who extravagantly dubbed his benefactor the 'grande démocrate,' but re-fashioning *le roi* Voltaire as 'l'un des fondateurs de la liberté' inevitably

¹⁶⁵ A. M. no. 151, 31 May 1791, p. 536.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Reflecting on the Civil Constitution, he had cautioned his colleagues: 'Prenez garde, il n'est pas bon de faire des martyrs.' A. M. no. 333, 29 November 1790, p. 495.

¹⁶⁸ The tenor of Marmontel's unctuous *Ode à la louange de Voltaire* is fairly typical of how the Republic of Letters viewed Voltaire's achievements: 'Notre Virgile est notre Horace, - Il est l'Aristote et le Tasse, - Il réunit Pope et Milton...' *Ode à la louange de Voltaire* in Marmontel, *Oeuvres*, 7 vols. (Paris, 1820 ed.) vol. vii, pp. 160-4, p. 161. La Harpe's description of Voltaire as 'le véritable héritier du grand siècle... l'ornement de nôtre' is another in this vein. J.-F. de la Harpe, *Éloge de Voltaire*, in Voltaire, *Oeuvres*, Beaumarchais ed. (Paris, 1785) vol. lxix, pp. 345-424. p. 349.

¹⁶⁹ Referring to Voltaire's many artistic achievements, Regnaud claimed that 'ces titres, tout précieux qu'ils sont, ne suffiraient pas pour décider les représentants de la nation française à décerner au

entailed a somewhat cavalier approach to the facts.¹⁷⁰ The *philosophe's* now suspect political opinions were prudently glossed over as unfortunate eccentricities, while his unfashionably ostentatious lifestyle was hastily dismissed as a harmless aberration.¹⁷¹ More imaginatively, the festival's supporters were keen to stress Voltaire's personal piety. The conservatives' charge that the Assembly was encouraging atheism clearly demanded rebuttal, and the chapel at Ferney and the *Credo* of 1763 were repeatedly flourished as evidence of a deep and sincere devotion.¹⁷² Some might have found these claims a trifle unconvincing, but under the circumstances, they were a convenient fiction. After all, creating a Voltaire fit for the 1790's was no easy task, and for all its flaws, this portrait was brutally to the point.

Voltaire may initially have seemed a rather improbable patron saint for the new régime, but his twin status as the evangelist of liberty and martyr of intolerance was invaluable to an embattled Revolution. However, while these speeches struck a belligerent note, the festival that the deputies envisaged was never intended to be an attack on religion *tout court* as historians have often claimed.¹⁷³ On the contrary, men such as Gossin or Regnaud were moderates anxious to reform the Church, not to overthrow it, while Treilhard, another of the fête's most conspicuous sponsors, was renowned as one of the Assembly's most pious members.¹⁷⁴ Far from being budding Fouchés or Chaumettes, these men had worked hard to restore the Church 'à sa pureté primitive' and they were not about to turn their backs on it.¹⁷⁵ And yet, for all their efforts, the current crisis demanded a response. Confronted by a trenchant papal anathema, a nation-wide schism and the surly refusal of hordes of the peasantry to accept the new dispensation, the deputies hastily conscripted Voltaire to their cause. Re-invented as the prophet of their settlement of Church and State, the commemoration of his memory was designed to consecrate the increasingly elusive

philosophe de Ferney les honneurs qu'on sollicite pour sa cendre.' A. M. no. 151, 31 May 1791, p. 536.

¹⁷⁰ Villette, *Lettres Choisis*, p. 125, and A. M. no. 151, 31 May 1791, p. 536.

¹⁷¹ Regnaud briefly alluded to the accusations of courtisanship levelled against Voltaire, but only to refute them, while Villette went to even great lengths to defend his patron against similar charges in the press. A. M. no. 151, 31 May 1791, p. 536, and Villette, *Lettres Choisis*, p. 126-30.

¹⁷² See for example, *Translation de Voltaire et cortège qui sera exécutée dans cette brillante cérémonie: suivi du Credo de Voltaire*, (s. l. s. d.) Brit. Lib. R407, no. 12 and Villette's trenchant defence against the charge of atheism in his *Lettres Choisis*, p. 130.

¹⁷³ For this line of interpretation, see D. Dowd, *Pageant-Master of the Republic: Jacques-Louis David and the French Revolution*, (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1948) p. 53, and J. McManners, *The French Revolution and the Church*, (London, 1969) p. 70.

¹⁷⁴ Tackett, *Becoming a Revolutionary*, p. 66.

middle ground expressed in the maxim emblazoned on the sarcophagus that bore the sage back to Paris: 'il combattit les athées et les fanatiques, il inspira la tolérance.'¹⁷⁶ Far from being a prelude to dechristianisation, Voltaire's return was designed as a vehicle for the Assembly's vision of a regenerated, compassionate and just clergy, a model for the nation united to fight the good fight against bigotry and fanaticism.

The fête was planned as an act of faith in the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, and nothing was permitted to detract from the clarity of this message, least of all any genuine reflection on the Revolution's debt to the *philosophes*. Despite the Assembly's ambition to avenge *la vertu opprimée*, that was not really the point of the discussion on 30 May, and Eymar's attempt to revive interest in his statue of Rousseau on the back of Voltaire's triumph was unceremoniously ignored. The same fate befell two similar motions to honour the memories of Montesquieu and Mably.¹⁷⁷ Neither they, nor Eymar's beloved Jean-Jacques, could furnish the Revolution with such a fitting standard as it faced its most serious challenge to date. They had not championed the cause of Calas, Sirven and La Barre, nor endured the same persecution at the hands of the clergy. Even Rousseau's passionate martyrdom for the truth might seem embarrassingly self-inflicted under the circumstances, and in any case, this was no time to resurrect the quarrels that had divided the Republic of Letters. Undoubtedly, Montesquieu and Rousseau were deserving cases, but their legacies were simply too equivocal to be of any immediate use to the deputies. Expediency dictated the politics of memory in the Assembly, and in the summer of 1791, a suitably modified Voltaire embodied a particularly expedient vision of the past. Whereas the Enlightenment had celebrated the precocious range of his talents, the Revolution transformed Voltaire's life and legacy into a crude parable of wronged virtue and ferocious fanaticism. The result was, of course, a caricature of a complex and contradictory reality, but then, despite its claim to legislate on behalf of posterity, historical authenticity was not the Assembly's main concern.

Having so carefully constructed this persecuted, pious, and singularly humourless patriarch, the Assembly's claims to embody the legacy of the *philosophes* were,

¹⁷⁵ The phrase is Treilhard's. *A. P.* 30 May 1790, vol. xv, p. 751.

¹⁷⁶ The inscription on the rear of the sarcophagus similarly proclaimed: 'Il défendit Calas, Sirven, de la Barre, Mont-Bailly.' For an engraving of Cellérier's chariot, B. N. Estampes, coll. Hennin, no. 11,015.

unfortunately, in for a rude awakening. The very day after the vote to install Voltaire in the Panthéon, and with an exquisite sense of timing, the abbé Raynal, author of the *Histoire philosophique* and sole survivor of the Enlightenment's glory days, finally aired his views on the Revolution. Raynal's epistle to the Assembly was nothing less than a bombshell. Confidently expecting his warm approval, the deputies listened in stunned outrage as the venerable *philosophe* denounced everything they had so painstakingly accomplished. The Revolution, he scolded, had brought France to the edge of the abyss; anarchy and licence were rampant, and all because the Assembly had mistaken the 'conceptions hardies de la philosophie' for a coherent programme of reform. This diatribe might have shaken the deputies' self-belief, but Robespierre came to their rescue, dismissing the abbé's tirade as the senile meanderings of a once great mind.¹⁷⁸ Apparently consoled by this rather unconvincing explanation, official preparations for the fête continued undeterred, and the authorities began dispatching invitations to attend 'les honneurs qu'elle [la nation] décerne à un des hommes qui ont le plus contribué à étendre ses lumières.'¹⁷⁹

As June progressed, the abbé Raynal's remonstrance was to prove the least of the deputies' worries. No sooner were plans for the fête announced than it became the object of a ferocious pamphlet war pitting the partisans of Voltaire's memory against conservatives predictably outraged by this latest affront to the faith. While the festival's champions contented themselves with tedious platitudes extolling the virtues of 'cet être surnaturel qui prépara notre heureuse révolution,' the conservative right retaliated by unleashing a torrent of quite exceptional venom.¹⁸⁰ Within a matter of days, a series of scabrous broadsides appeared on the streets, lampooning the planned festival and the pretensions of its organisers, and singling Villette out for particularly scurrilous abuse.¹⁸¹ The right-wing press was equally outspoken. Attacking the festival in the name of outraged 'piété et la pudeur', the *Ami du Roi* denounced Voltaire's influence as both pernicious and immoral, and mocked the

¹⁷⁷ These suggestions came from Prugnon and Charboud. A. M. no. 151, 31 May 1791, p. 537.

¹⁷⁸ A. M. no. 153, 2 June 1791, pp. 553-6.

¹⁷⁹ Invitation to the ceremony from Pastoret on behalf of the département. A. N., F4/1246, no. 7.

¹⁸⁰ *Réponse à la Pétition des 160 Jansénistes, relative à la translation de Voltaire*, (Paris, s. d.) B. L., F. R. 371, no. 12, p. 5.

¹⁸¹ The allusions to Villette's homosexuality as 'le ci-derrrière Marquis de Villette, citoyen rétroactif de Paris' are typical of the vicious nature of the polemic that ensued. Anon. *L'Apothéose de Voltaire ou le triomphe de la Religion et des Mœurs*, (s. l. s. d.) B. N. Lb39/5186. See also the anon. *Lettre Apologétique à Messieurs les Administrateurs du département de Paris*, B. L. F.R. 371, no. 10.

decision of this 'aréopage de graves sénateurs' to 'canonise... le plus grand fléau qui a existé en Europe'.¹⁸² Given Voltaire's reputation, some such vitriol was probably inevitable, but the reaction of the capital's constitutional clergy was infinitely more troubling. Twenty-two of the city's newly installed *curés* and *vicaires* joined forces with a host of magistrates, notables and concerned citizens to petition the Assembly to cancel this costly 'espèce d'apothéose'.¹⁸³ Certainly, the petitioners expressed no great affection for Voltaire, the 'adulateur des grands, ce contempteur du peuple... sans foi, sans principes', but their primary concern was with the damaging effect the ceremony would have on their attempts to persuade their flocks to accept the Constitutional Church. Celebrating Voltaire now, they warned, would inflict 'un déplaisir amer' on the jurors, and hand the refractories a propaganda triumph into the bargain.¹⁸⁴ Copies of the controversial petition were plastered across the city, provoking further polemics,¹⁸⁵ but more importantly, the clergy's repudiation of the fête delivered a severe blow to the Assembly's hopes of securing the new dispensation with another demonstration of patriotic accord. The Constitutional Church had delivered its verdict: there would be no one to wear the vestments that had been specially ordered for the procession.

Hardly had the repercussions of this development sunk in when the organisation of the festival, and the Revolution as a whole, received yet another grave setback. Scarcely three weeks after the Assembly's decision to honour the memory of Voltaire, and with preparations for the parade in full swing, Louis XVI tried to flee the country, throwing the entire constitutional settlement into chaos. Voltaire's triumphant return to Paris, postponed for a week as a result, was thus celebrated by a bewildered body politic unsure of the future and suspicious of the Assembly's attempts to paper over the all too obvious cracks in the constitutional edifice. With public opinion in a state of constant flux and demands for a republic echoing across the capital,¹⁸⁶ the pantheonisation of Voltaire took place just as the consensus it was intended to cement fell apart.

¹⁸² *L'Ami du Roi, des Français, de l'Ordre...*, 1 juin 1791, p. 2.

¹⁸³ *Pétition à l'Assemblée Nationale relative au transport de Voltaire*, (Paris, s. d.) B. N. Ln27/20801.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁸⁵ See, for example, the anon. *Réponse à la Pétition des 160 Jansénistes, relative à la translation de Voltaire*, B. L. F.R. 371 (12) and L.- R.- J. Boussemart, *Voltaire vengé*, B. N. Ln 27/20802.

¹⁸⁶ Writing on the day of the festival, Mme Roland captured the prevailing mood when she claimed that: 'on vit ici dix ans en vingt-quatre heures.' *Lettres de Mme Roland*, C. Perroud (ed.) vol. ii, p. 325.

Despite the deluge that delayed its start on 11 July, Voltaire's return to Paris was, by all accounts, a lavish affair. Witnesses invariably resorted to superlatives to describe the enormous variety of the pageant, the astonishing array of busts, banners and participants, and the superb decoration of the chariot that bore Voltaire's coffin on its route through the city. (See Figure 5) Mme Roland, never one of Voltaire's greatest admirers, was charmed by 'cette fête noble et touchante', the Bordelais student Edmond Gérard pronounced it 'imposant,' while Nicolas Ruault thought the procession simply 'magnifique.'¹⁸⁷ A few patrician spirits, the visiting Viscount Palmerston and the Marquis de Ferrières for example, mocked the disorderly march of the National Guardsmen and scoffed at the drunken *poissardes* and bedraggled porters decked out in antique attire for the occasion, but even the most unsympathetic observers were compelled to acknowledge the sheer enormity of the event.¹⁸⁸ Few could have been as antagonistic to the festival's purpose as the royalist journalist, Galart de Montjoye, but even he grudgingly conceded that it was 'tout-à-la fois burlesque et magnifique.'¹⁸⁹ Despite the appalling weather that morning, the cortège that followed Voltaire's remains to the Panthéon seemed a worthy successor to the funeral march that had accompanied Mirabeau's coffin up the Mont Sainte-Geneviève. The crowds that lined the route were just as vast as in April, the range of participants just as varied, and yet, what struck most observers was not the continuity between these two ceremonies, but a marked sense of rupture with everything that had gone before. As an uncharacteristically astute Guittard de Floriban recorded in his diary, this festival had no precedent 'ni en France ni ailleurs, excepté à Rome', and for once, the inevitable allusion to antiquity was not misplaced.¹⁹⁰ Far from being simply a sequel to the Tribune's last rites, the Pantheonisation of Voltaire was, in every sense, 'un fête d'un ordre nouveau.'¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁷ By comparison, she dismissed the Federation three days later as a 'morne' spectacle. *Lettres de Mme Roland*, vol. ii, pp. 327-8. E. Gérard, *Journal d'un Étudiant pendant la Révolution*, p. 99, and N. Ruault, *Gazette d'un Parisien*, p. 251.

¹⁸⁸ *The Dispatches of Earl Gower, English Ambassador at Paris from June 1790 to August 1792*, O. Browning, ed. (Cambridge, 1885) p. 289, and Ferrières, *Correspondence Inédite*, p. 385.

¹⁸⁹ *L'Ami du Roi, des Français, de l'Ordre et surtout de la Vérité*, no. cxciv, 13 July 1791, p. 775.

¹⁹⁰ C. Guittard de Floriban, *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris sous la Révolution*, (Paris, 1974) p. 71.

¹⁹¹ *Pétition à l'Assemblée Nationale relative au Transport de Voltaire*, B. N. Ln27, 20801, p. 3.

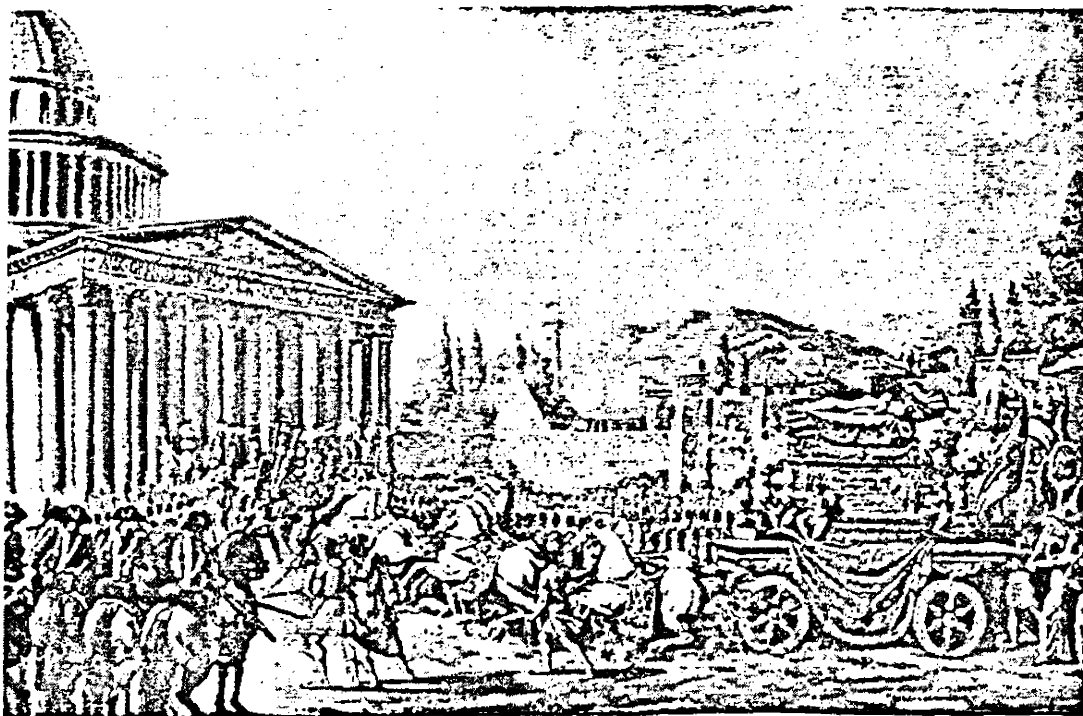


Figure 5, Lagrenée le jeune, *Translation des cendres de Voltaire au Panthéon*, B. N. Estampes, coll. Hennin, no. 11013.

The reason for this overwhelming sense of novelty was simple. As the *Révolutions de Paris* cheerfully explained: 'la religion ne fut pour rien dans l'apothéose de Voltaire.'¹⁹² In the midst of so much pageantry, so many troupes of artists and musicians, so many delegations of *clubistes*, Guardsmen and deputies, the priests who had performed the honours in April were conspicuous by their absence on the 11th of July. Admittedly, a few clerics do appear in accounts of this extraordinary fête, but only to denounce it as a sacrilegious travesty, and to be mocked in their turn as ridiculous vestiges of a by-gone era. The 'prédicateur de la liberté' of 1789 had become a spiteful caricature: 'un noir corbeau' croaking an embittered "Dieu tu sera vengé" as the parade passed him by.¹⁹³

It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of this development. For centuries, the sacred had lain at the heart of the city's ceremonial life, but on that sodden summer afternoon, 'ni croix, ni bannières, ni ecclésiastiques' marked the passing of the procession.¹⁹⁴ Instead, this time-honoured panoply of religious signs and symbols had

¹⁹² *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 105, 16 July 1791, p. 10.

¹⁹³ *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 105, 16 July 1791, p. 5.

¹⁹⁴ *L'Ami du Roi*, 13 July 1791, no. cxciv, p. 776.

been replaced by a baffling mishmash of Rousseauist *sensibilité* and Roman virtue that was all too difficult to decipher, but all too easy to ridicule as 'cette fête turco-graeco-romaine'.¹⁹⁵ At the very point when the Revolution was most in need of stability, when the reassuring presence of the familiar might have helped allay the public's fears for the future, this spectacle offered no such consolations. Drawing on no clear ceremonial precedent, this rootless and exotic ensemble lacked the benediction of custom, the familiarity of words and gestures that gives ritual its ability to engender social cohesion.¹⁹⁶ In the troubled circumstances that followed Varennes, the triumph of Voltaire left an already disorientated public 'dans le stupeur de l'étonnement que cause un spectacle nouveau pour lui.'¹⁹⁷ As a result, the meaning of this extraordinary ritual was thrown open to all comers. The "correct" interpretation of the festival escaped the confines of its authors' intentions and its script became the property of its audience. To an extent, such an outcome was inevitable. As Lynn Hunt has suggested, all revolutionary ceremonial bore witness to the tensions and uncertainties involved in reading images, but the discrepancy between the Assembly's intentions in decreeing a festival and the public's response to it was rarely as pronounced as this.¹⁹⁸ In the space of a few months, the public that had mourned Mirabeau in unison had dissolved into a cacophony of conflicting voices, and the result was little short of chaos.

Paradoxically, the only group to react to the fête in a consistently Voltairean fashion was the conservative right, which showered the entire procession in acerbic mockery. Mme de Genlis' reaction was typical. It was, she declared bitterly, 'la chose la plus inepte, la plus scandaleuse et la plus complètement ridicule qu'on ait vue à Paris,' and the royalist press was no less scathing.¹⁹⁹ One after another, the *Actes des Apôtres*, the *Journal Général de la Cour et de la Ville* and the *Ami du Roi* queued up to take

¹⁹⁵ Duval, *Souvenirs de la Terreur*, vol. i, p. 291.

¹⁹⁶ There are as many definitions of ritual as there are anthropologists, but the importance of symbolic and ceremonial familiarity is common to all. As Susan Langer suggests, ritual 'is not a free expression of emotions, but a disciplined rehearsal of "right attitudes".' S. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite and Art*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1969 ed.) p.153.

¹⁹⁷ Writing to his wife two days after the event, Ferrières was quite emphatic that the novelty of the occasion left the public confused and bewildered, and he was not alone in noting this. Sergeant-Marceau came to much the same conclusion in his memoirs. Ferrières, *Corr. Inédite*, p. 385, and A. Sergeant-Marceau, *Reminiscences of a Regicide*, (London, 1889) p. 120.

¹⁹⁸ Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class*, p. 74.

¹⁹⁹ Mme de Genlis, *Mémoires*, (Paris, 1825) vol. iv, p. 104.

pot shots at 'la grande farce philosophique.'²⁰⁰ With costs finally reaching 35,668 *livres*, suggestions that such reckless spending would be better devoted to buying bread for the poor were commonplace, but it was the confused iconography and sacrilegious pretensions of the festival that attracted most comment from the right.²⁰¹ Given the commotion that had greeted the Assembly's decree, some such criticism was only to be expected, but if the right reacted according to type, left-wing opinion was much less consistent in its response to the ceremony. Few royalist writers could match Marat for acrimony concerning Voltaire, and while he remained studiously silent on the festival itself, the *Ami du Peuple* had already made his views quite clear on the matter. For Marat, to even think of honouring

un écrivain scandaleux qui pervertit la jeunesse par les leçons d'une fausse philosophie et dont le cœur fut le trône de l'envie, de l'avarice, de la malignité, de la vengeance, de la perfidie et de toutes les passions qui dégradent la nature humaine

was simply testimony to the corruption of the Assembly itself.²⁰² Marat's reaction was, as usual, extreme, but in the strained circumstances of the summer, even those on the left who endorsed the celebrations sometimes had reservations. The *Révolutions de Paris*, for example, was generally positive about the planned fête, but from its very inception, Prudhomme had warned lest the festivities should distract the people from vigilance, citing the bread and circuses of ancient Rome as a cautionary precedent.²⁰³

Marat's personal bile and Prudhomme's prophetic counsel aside, left-wing opinion broadly welcomed the festival and the radical press devoted generous column inches to accounts of the procession. The *Chronique de Paris* was especially enthusiastic, and declared emphatically that 'le peuple semblait déifier son libérateur.'²⁰⁴ Having campaigned so long on his behalf, it was only natural that Voltaire should occupy centre-stage in the *Chronique's* reports. However, for many on the left, the focus of attention was less the return of the exile than the fate of the outcast lurking in the Tuileries, and one episode in particular demonstrates how radical opinion shifted its

²⁰⁰ *Journal de la Cour et de la Ville*, vol. iv, no. 13, July 1791, p. 102 and no. 14, 14 July, p. 105.

²⁰¹ Tuetey, vol. iii, no. 5747, p. 558. This was, of course, a mere pittance in comparison to the 900,000 *livres* spent on the Federation in 1790. A. N. F13/204. For the probably apocryphal reaction of one Parisian woman to the spectacle: 'Ça ne donne pas du pain', see the *Journal de la Cour et de la Ville*, no. 13, 13 July 1791, p. 103. See also the contemptuous reaction of the *Actes des Apôtres*, no. 183, p. 13 and *l'Ami du Roi*, July 13, p. 3.

²⁰² *L'Ami du Peuple*, no. 421, 6 April 1791, in Marat, *Œuvres politiques*, vol. v, p. 2661.

²⁰³ *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 100, 10 June 1791, p. 450.

²⁰⁴ *Chronique de Paris*, no. 193, 12 July 1791, p. 782.

gaze from the ostensible purpose of the festival to the more immediate concerns of post-Varennes France. As the procession wound its way through the city, it paused outside Villette's house, across the river from the royal palace, for one of several symbolic stations en route to the Panthéon.²⁰⁵ Here, in a specially constructed amphitheatre decorated with garlands of oak and flowers, a tearful Villette and his wife greeted the cortège.²⁰⁶ Joyous applause rang out as an obviously emotional *Belle et Bonne* placed a laurel wreath on Houdon's bust of her benefactor, but for most commentators, the main attraction was the presence of Jean Calas' daughters alongside the weeping Villette. Dressed in mourning, bearing silent witness to the memory of their father's champion, Calas' daughters were a living, breathing indictment of the religious bigotry that had scarred France for centuries.²⁰⁷ Their quiet dignity testified to the horrors of fanaticism that the new régime had promised to extirpate, but in deciphering this episode, many observers went much further, and this touching tableau became, instead, a reproach directed against the monarchy itself. Many imagined, and indeed, claimed to have seen the royal couple secretly observing these dramatic scenes from their hiding place across the river, and drew the obvious conclusions. Few could resist emphasising the contrast between the frank display of emotion on the left bank and the unseen and unmoved monarch, concealing himself from the view of the nation.²⁰⁸ This notion of the hidden despot became the mirror image of the parade, just as Voltaire, Calas and all the other characters in this melodrama had come to represent the suffering of the righteous. The king who had opposed the Civil Constitution and then betrayed his oath to the nation had become the villain of the piece, an emblem of the moral bankruptcy of a monarchy that could not be regenerated. Stigmatised as the 'ci-devant roi,' 'un roi fuyard et déshonoré', Louis was cast as the shadowy antithesis of a new sovereign, the 'roi de l'opinion publique.'²⁰⁹ The meaning of the festival was thus radically altered. Whereas the federation had celebrated the union of Nation, Law and King, Voltaire's pantheonisation was re-invented by the radical press as a barbed encore to the 'excommunication du silence' the royal family had endured on its return to Paris a

²⁰⁵ The other stops from the Bastille to the Panthéon were at the *Opéra* and the *Comédie Française*.

²⁰⁶ The fullest account of the 'dôme de verdure' that appeared outside Villette's house and the 'spectacle unique' that took place there is in the *Chronique de Paris*, no. 193, 12 July 1791, pp. 781-2.

²⁰⁷ *Bouche de Fer*, no. 90, 12 July 1791, p. 3, and *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 105, 16 July 1791, p. 9.

²⁰⁸ *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 105, 16 July 1791, p. 8, and the *Bouche de Fer*, no. 90, 12 July 1791, p. 2.

²⁰⁹ *Le Courrier des LXXXIII départements*, no. xiii, 13 July 1791, p. 178.

few weeks earlier.²¹⁰ No longer capable of symbolically sustaining a discredited constitutional settlement, the triumph of Voltaire had become the first 'fête républicaine.'²¹¹

This same notion, the symbolic expulsion of the king from the body politic, was also embodied in a quite distinct set of reactions to the apotheosis of Voltaire. With the exception of the previous year's Federation, the spectacle on the 11th of July 1791 was the subject of more paintings and prints than any other Revolutionary festival. Many newspapers supplemented their reports of the festival with hastily executed sketches of the procession, while those less pressed by journalistic deadlines opted either for detailed drawings of Cellerier's chariot or for allegorical depictions of the event.²¹² However, a few engravers renounced these hackneyed images and offered the public a more explicitly partisan interpretation of the day's events. Right-wing journalists were not the only ones to cast an ironic eye over the festival, but the anonymous engraver of one satirical print embraced an altogether different vision of the fête from that propagated by Montjoye or Royou. (See Figure 6) Here, with the Panthéon and the procession clearly visible in the background, a winged figure of Immortality heralds the triumph of Voltaire with a trumpet call. At the same time, however, this avenging angel knocks a bust of Louis XVI, 'le faux pas' off his pedestal with a blast from an altogether different direction.²¹³ As if this graphic *bouleversement* was not striking enough, the accompanying texts left the viewer in no doubt as to the meaning of the image. The banners suspended from Immortality's trumpets proclaimed the date of Louis' fall from grace, 21 June, while citing Voltaire's own words to demystify the monarchy: 'Un roi n'est plus qu'un homme avec un titre auguste'. To finally drive the point home, the underlying caption denounced the king as 'ce monstre votre idole horreur du genre humain' while proclaiming 'nous ne redoutons plus le pouvoir tyrannique [sic].' Skilfully blending the classical iconography of the festival with the ribald humour of popular culture, this engraving transformed the

²¹⁰ Michelet, *Histoire de la Révolution Française*, vol. i, p. 640.

²¹¹ *Bouche de Fer*, no. 90, 12 July 1791, p. 2.

²¹² See, for example, the illustrations of the parade in the *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 105, 16 July 1791 and the *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 84. Having initially depicted the day's events with a rather feeble allegory depicting France gesturing appreciatively towards a bust of Voltaire, upon which a winged cherub has placed a wreath, Desmoulins' engraver returned to the festival two issues later with a print of the carriage that carried Voltaire through Paris.

²¹³ Anon. *La Renommée renversant du pied le buste de Louis XVI et planant au-dessus de celui de Voltaire*, B. N. Estampes, coll. de Hennin, no. 11019.

ceremony into a bawdy vehicle for the republican message, a graphic foretaste of the petition on the Champs de Mars a few days later.



Figure 6, Anon. 11 juillet: la Renommée renversant du pied le buste de Louis XVI et planant au-dessus de celui de Voltaire, B. N. Estampes, coll. de Hennin, no. 11019.

From the point of view of its organisers (who by late July had largely joined the conservative Feuillant club), the public's fractured response to the festival was little short of a disaster. The crowds that lined the streets had brought their own agendas to the parade and these had little in common with the deputies' aim of shoring up their own legitimacy by latching onto the legacy of the Enlightenment. Legitimacy, as Hunt suggests, 'is the general agreement on signs and symbols,' but in this atmosphere of fear and confusion, no 'general agreement on signs and symbols' could possibly exist, and the triumph of Voltaire quickly became the object of an interpretative free for all.²¹⁴ A chasm opened up between the purpose of the festival and the spectacle itself, as from every point on the political spectrum observers re-invented the event according to their own partisan requirements. Seen from the right,

²¹⁴ Hunt, *Politics, Class and Culture*, p. 54.

the return of Voltaire was made to reinforce the papal charge of godless depravity, while the left seized on the episode on the quai Voltaire in order to undermine all attempts to redeem the King's reputation with the fiction of 'un enlèvement'. In press reports and prints, a divided polity steadily reconfigured the meaning of the festival to suit its own purposes, all the while giving the lie to the Assembly's attempts to salvage what remained of its moral authority from the implications of both *Quod aliquantum* and Varennes. Unable to draw upon the established certainties of traditional ritual, and too enervated by crisis to impose its vision as the dominant narrative of the festival, the Assembly's opportunistic attempt to rally the nation around the figure of Voltaire had simply fallen apart under *la force des choses*.

Instead of re-enacting the elegant euphoria that had greeted Voltaire's return to the *Comédie Française* in March 1778, his homecoming in July 1791 had descended into acrimonious chaos.²¹⁵ It was, for the deputies, a chastening experience. The depth of their disillusion can be gauged from the Assembly's reaction to the suggestion, a few weeks later, that Rousseau should take his place alongside Voltaire in the Panthéon. The debate was provoked by the arrival of two petitions, one from the inhabitants of Montmorency and the other bearing over three hundred signatures, including those of Ginguéné, Mercier, Gorsas, Panckouke, and Roland, demanding that Rousseau should receive 'les honneurs dus aux grands hommes.'²¹⁶ Innocuous though the proposal seemed and impeccable though its sponsors' Revolutionary credentials were, the deputies were initially aghast. Unsure of what line to take, they simply played for time. Several speakers objected that moving Rousseau's remains from Ermenonville would betray his last wishes, a point that had somehow seemed irrelevant when discussing Mirabeau's funeral in April, while Charles de Lameth even suggested that the move would violate the sacred property rights of the marquis de Girardin.²¹⁷ The matter was eventually referred to committee, and although the pantheonisation was sullenly approved a few weeks later, the Assembly's perfunctory decree showed no

²¹⁵ According to Grimm, Voltaire's arrival in the theatre had provoked a rapturous response and 'ce transport, cette espèce de délire universel a duré plus de vingt minutes.' *Corr. Litt.*, vol. xii, p. 70.

²¹⁶ *Pétition à l'Assemblée Nationale, contenant demande de la translation des cendres de J. J. Rousseau, au Panthéon Française*, (Paris, 1791) and A. M. no. 242, 30 August 1791, pp. 523-27.

²¹⁷ A. M. no. 242, 30 August 1791, p. 526. In April, the Assembly had casually brushed aside the objection that Mirabeau had specifically requested to be buried in Argenteuil on the grounds that 'les dépouilles d'un homme célèbre appartiennent... à la patrie', a precedent Boissy d'Anglas referred to during the August debate on Rousseau. A. P. vol. xxiv, p. 543 and vol. xxix, p. 760.

real stomach for the scheme.²¹⁸

No fanfare accompanied Jean-Jacques' adoption by the *patrie* on September 21, and nor was there any of the urgency that had bundled Voltaire into the Panthéon a few months before. Perhaps in the weeks that followed the massacre on the Champ de Mars, the prospect of assembling another large crowd on the streets of Paris appeared ill-advised, but it seems just as likely that the deputies had learnt their lesson from the triumph of Voltaire. It had all been too easy for radicals and reactionaries alike to re-fashion Voltaire in their own image, and the Assembly was loath to grant them an opportunity to do the same with Rousseau. With the benefit of hindsight, it had become clear that for every right-thinking elector who looked to Jean-Jacques as 'le premier fondateur de la constitution française', there was also a Marat wielding Rousseau's motto *vitam impendere vero* as his own, or a Lenormant brandishing the *Contrat Social* in order to damn the new constitution as a worthless compromise.²¹⁹ Despite the deputies' best efforts to shape the legacy of the *philosophes* to satisfy their own immediate needs, that legacy was simply too ambivalent to allow the Assembly to monopolise its meaning with any confidence. Warily, they left the celebration of Rousseau's memory to their successors, but both the Legislative Assembly and the Convention proved equally reluctant to take on the project. Despite periodic flurries of activity, the matter was left to languish for three years, until the Thermidorians' desperate quest for a *raison d'être* finally overcame any scruples about disturbing the tranquillity of the *île des peupliers*. Even then, Rousseau's pantheonisation in October 1794 was a somewhat embarrassed affair, more a celebration of benevolent rusticity than the call to philosophic arms that the petitioners of 1791 had originally envisaged.²²⁰

²¹⁸ A. M. no. 265, 22 September 1791, p. 731. Nor for that matter, did many on the left. Marat, for example, called on the marquis de Girardin to resist the proposed 'outrage fait aux cendres de J.-J. Rousseau' in the name of friendship and honour. *L'Ami du Peuple*, no. 543, 2 September 1791, p. 7. Girardin duly obliged, and dispatched a letter to the deputies in early September calling on them not to disturb Rousseau's remains in the name of 'la loi naturelle, la loi civile, la loi religieuse', but to no avail. A. P. vol. xxx, p. 191.

²¹⁹ A. M. no. 242, 30 August 1791, p. 523. According to Lenormant, 'Rousseau, loin d'être l'auteur de la révolution de 1789, en eût été l'adversaire et le fléau.' C.-F. Lenormant, *J. J. Rousseau, Aristocrate*, (Paris, 1790) B. N. Lb39/3927, p. 5.

²²⁰ This sense of discomfort is all too obvious in Lakanal's convoluted *Rapport sur J. J. Rousseau, fait au nom du Comité d'Instruction Publique par Lakanal dan la séance du 29 fructidor*, (Paris, an III)

A week after the Assembly first considered the matter of Rousseau's re-interment in Paris, a bogus advertisement appeared in the *Ami du Peuple*. Referring to the debate on the proposed pantheonisation, Marat advised any of his readers in possession of 'les cendres de quelque auteur illustre... de s'adresser au comité constitutif antinationale lequel leur en donnera un pris raisonnable.'²²¹ This ironic announcement seems an especially caustic comment on the politics of the Panthéon, but like so many of Marat's acerbic asides, this cruel quip rings strangely true. Despite the grand speeches that marked them out as the 'fondateurs de la liberté', little really united Mirabeau, Voltaire and Rousseau but the deputies' increasingly desperate attempts to enhance their own authority by commemorating their memory. On the contrary, the three constituted, as Marat's unkind 'quelque' implied only too clearly, an unconvincing, even slightly ridiculous, collection of founding fathers for the new régime. However, the sheer improbability of this hotchpotch of scheming politicians and antagonistic *philosophes* speaks volumes of the reasons that determined the recourse to remembrance in 1791. To commemorate is to choose, but the National Assembly's choices owed more to chance and contingency, to the sudden death or the equally sudden fit of pique, than they did to any conscious deliberation or any grand scheme of civic instruction. Such reflection would come later, with the foundation of the *Comité d'Instruction Publique*, but in 1791, the National Assembly's manipulation of memory was all too often ill considered and impulsive.

In search of a grand gesture to placate public opinion, the deputies had blundered into establishing the Panthéon, and two months later, their adoption of the Voltairean legacy was no less impetuous. Widely repudiated and increasingly intimidated by forces it could not comprehend, the Assembly seized on the propaganda potential of the past with an ardour born out of mounting desperation, and launched the return of Voltaire as a glorious encore to the funeral of Mirabeau. The grief, sometimes heartfelt, sometimes not, that had characterised the ceremonies of the spring had briefly bound the nation together, but the triumph of Voltaire was decreed in a spirit of retaliation rather than recognition, and it rebounded disastrously on its organisers. The Assembly's unhurried approach to the pantheonisation of Rousseau suggests a

²²¹ *Ami du Peuple*, no. 548, 7 September 1791, p. 8.

newfound discretion in these matters, but this very lack of enthusiasm betrays the hollowness of the deputies' claims to legislate in the name of posterity. Despite the ostentatious rhetoric that accompanied the foundation of the Panthéon and the festivals that attended it, the deputies had neither the time nor the inclination to ponder the meaning of memory in the new France. Still less had they the leisure to reflect on the complex relationship between Revolution and Enlightenment. Instead, reflection gave way to reckoning, a crude calculation of political convenience that grasped at the symbolic capital to be had from celebrating Voltaire in order to shame Rome, but that balked at honouring Rousseau lest the consequences prove too unpredictable. Doubtless, many revolutionaries were sincere in their desire to commemorate the heroes of the past, but sincerity did not raise Eymar's statue of Rousseau any more than it had paid for David's *Jeu de Paume*.

Commemoration is never innocent, but in 1791 it was largely unplanned, and for this reason it was apt to have unforeseen and unsettling consequences. Foremost among these was the sudden disappearance of the clergy from the capital's rites of memory. Although many on the left welcomed this departure, few had really anticipated it. Certainly, both Mirabeau and Talleyrand had tackled the relationship between the rites of the Church and those of the Revolution in their respective essays on Public Instruction, but neither report could be said to have inspired this development. The Tribune's posthumous call for a complete break between the ceremonies of Church and State was prophetic, but it was published too late to have any influence on the festival on 11 July, while Talleyrand's *Rapport sur l'Instruction Publique* appeared even later and was, in any case, much more cautious.²²² Whereas Mirabeau had been emphatic in his desire to secularise the ceremonial life of the new régime, Talleyrand, typically, hedged his bets. Reporting to the Assembly in September, he urged his colleagues to look to antiquity for the ideal form of civic ceremonial, but still reserved a place for the Church in the Revolution's rites of remembrance, arguing that religion furnished the only appropriate medium for such sorrowful ceremonies.²²³ In theory then, the pantheonisation of Voltaire did not close the book on clerical involvement in

²²² In his undelivered speech *De l'Instruction Publique*, Mirabeau could not have been more explicit: 'il n'y aura désormais aucune cérémonie religieuse dans ces fêtes.' A. P. vol. xxx, pp. 512-54, p. 531.

²²³ Distinguishing between 'les fêtes de l'allégresse' and those 'de la douleur', Talleyrand maintained that religious ritual had a rôle to play in the latter: 'pour y porter ses consolations.' Talleyrand, *Rapport sur l'Instruction Publique, fait au nom du Comité de Constitution à l'Assemblée nationale, les*

the Revolution's rites of memory; but as the Assembly's work drew to a close, putting the finishing touches on the Constitution took precedence over analysing the implications of Talleyrand's report. Instead, the deputies contented themselves with inserting a last-minute article into the Constitution, a nebulous clause proposing a programme of national festivals 'pour conserver le souvenir de la Révolution'.²²⁴ No longer simply a moral responsibility, still less a matter of political expediency, commemoration had become a constitutional duty, a civic obligation for all patriotic Frenchmen. Modestly, however, the deputies left the mechanics of the matter to their successors. In the end, they simply refused to choose between the requiem masses of the spring and the new spectacle that had escorted Voltaire to the Panthéon. Others would make the choice for them.

10, 11 et 19 septembre 1791, (Paris, 1791) B. L. R.689, p. 112.

²²⁴ 'Il sera établi des fêtes nationales pour conserver le souvenir de la Révolution française, entretenir la fraternité entre les citoyens, et les attacher à la Constitution, à la Patrie et aux lois.' *A. M.* no. 247, p. 572.

Chapter IV

Cette Basilique réunira tous les Hommes

The National Assembly had stumbled into establishing the Panthéon with little or no consideration of the consequences. And yet, for all the lack of direction they had initially shown on 3 April, the deputies' decision to requisition Sainte-Geneviève on behalf of the *Patrie* seems to have satisfied the public's desire for a grand gesture to mark the death of Mirabeau. Admittedly, some voices were raised against the Assembly's decree, but they were isolated figures howling their protests from the margins of political society. Predictably, conservative Catholics led the charge. The hitherto pro-Revolutionary *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques* denounced the establishment of the Panthéon as an act of despotic plunder, and a few pamphleteers condemned it as a sacrilegious desecration.¹ But in the main, such pious outrage counted for little in the face of the massed ranks of clergymen who escorted Mirabeau's coffin up the Mont Sainte-Geneviève. At the opposite end of the political spectrum, Marat was just as scathing as the staunchest *fanatique*, albeit for quite different reasons. Like some other radicals, he had ridiculed the honours heaped on Mirabeau from the very first, but uniquely on the left, he looked on the foundation of the Panthéon with an equally jaundiced eye. Mocking the prospect of 'une Assemblée des hommes bas, rampants, vils et ineptes se constituant juges d'immortalité', he cautioned against yet another manoeuvre designed to glorify the Assembly and dupe the people with empty

¹ *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques*, 1791, pp. 149-50, and the anonymous *Amende Honorable à Dieu et à Sainte-Geneviève*, (Paris, s.d.) Brit. Lib., R334.22.

'pantalonnades'. The Panthéon, he warned, would be little more than a 'réceptacle' for court flunkies, corrupt deputies, and his own particular *bête noire*, 'la tourbe académique'. The truly virtuous, men such as Montesquieu and Rousseau, would blush to find themselves in such foul company. As for *l'ami du peuple* himself, even the prospect of such a 'cruel outrage' left him inconsolable.²

As usual however, Marat's views were exceptional. Even those who shared his scepticism about Mirabeau nevertheless welcomed the establishment of a Panthéon as an inspired move, long overdue, but all the more welcome for that. Reflecting on the events of early April, Desmoulin's doubts concerning the Tribune's personal and political probity dissolved when he turned to the substance of the Assembly's decree, and he confidently predicted that 'cette basilique réunira tous les hommes... il n'y aura point de disputes parmi les hommes sur la sainteté de ce temple et de ses reliques'.³ Provincial opinion seemed equally enthused. Applauding the Assembly's decision to consecrate this 'source féconde de la vertu', Verdun's Jacobins even claimed that they had anticipated it in discussion a few months earlier, and that winter, Charles Chaisneau, curé of Plombières and future high priest of *théophilanthropie*, forecast that the Panthéon would soon become 'la meilleure école des vertus civiques'.⁴ With such accolades ringing in their ears, the deputies had good reason to feel pleased with the laconic decree that finally established the Panthéon.⁵ In a few short clauses, they had managed to satisfy public opinion with a suitable degree of ostentation without having to authorise any controversial *concours* such as the one the *Commune des Arts* was demanding for the Rousseau statue. Above all, requisitioning Sainte-Geneviève appeared to offer the Assembly a convenient and surprisingly inexpensive resolution to a very pressing political problem.

Unfortunately, the deputies' buoyant expectations of a cheap and cheerful solution to the problems of Revolutionary commemoration were soon deceived. On almost every count, from Desmoulins' optimistic expectation that the new building would unite a

² *L'Ami du Peuple*, no. 420, 5 April 1791 and no. 421, 6 April 1791, in Marat, *Œuvres Politiques*, vol. v, p. 2655, and pp. 2661-2.

³ *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, no. 72, p. 321.

⁴ Address from the Jacobin club of Verdun, 5th of April 1791, A. N. C131, and C. Chaisneau, *Le Panthéon Français, ou Discours prononcé sur les honneurs publics décernés par la Nation à la mémoire des Grands Hommes*, (Dijon, 1792) B.N. Lb39/5958, p. 11.

⁵ A. P. vol. xxiv, p. 543.

divided nation to the thorny question of cost, the Panthéon proved to be an unhappy expedient, a contentious and expensive exercise in the volatility of Revolutionary memory. As it evolved under the dictatorial direction of Quatremère de Quincy, the warm welcome that had greeted its creation rapidly dissolved in controversy as the artistic establishment repudiated both the Assembly's decision and Quatremère's execution of the project. While these artistic squabbles were serious enough in themselves, their political implications were even more damaging for the Panthéon's prospects of uniting Frenchmen and women around a single, authoritative interpretation of the Revolutionary past. Out of step with the aesthetic expectations of the elite and out of tune with the tempo of popular commemoration, the Panthéon proved unable to stem the rising tide of discord that engulfed the commemorations of 1792. As the consensus of 1789 finally collapsed, it soon became apparent that the controversy that had surrounded the triumph of Voltaire was simply a taste of things to come.

Within weeks of the decree establishing the Panthéon, the marquis de Villette complained that an increasing number of

écrivains philosophes regrettent le décret qui place dans un temple les grands hommes de la patrie. Ils auraient préféré la voûte du ciel, et les avenues de la Capitale pour ces illustres mausolées.⁶

Villette had good cause for concern. While the general public might have welcomed the creation of the Panthéon, informed opinion was anything but comfortable with the decision to install Mirabeau in Sainte-Geneviève. On the contrary, the cognoscenti, far from applauding the Assembly's decision, roundly condemned it as aesthetically inappropriate and geographically unsuited to its new rôle. Just a few days after Mirabeau's death, the *Révolutions de Paris* led the way with a blunt dismissal of Sainte-Geneviève as a suitable venue for the Tribune's burial, suggesting instead that 'l'autel de la patrie est seul digne de lui servir de tombe'. Prudhomme's concerns were in part political; the deputies, as he saw it, had displayed an outrageous indifference to the popular demand that Mirabeau should be interred on the *Champ de*

⁶ Letter of 8 May 1791, in Villette, *Lettres Choisies*..., p. 138.

la Fédération, but his criticism also went much further than this. Having chastised the Assembly for its insensitivity to the sections' proposal, he went on to argue that

une chapelle élégante, enrichie de tout le luxe de l'architecture... ne porte point du tout ce caractère de rudesse et de simplicité, que nécessite un monument funèbre.⁷

Initially, this objection was little more than an aside in a more general commentary, but as the weeks passed, more and more authors followed in Prudhomme's wake, questioning the wisdom of the Assembly's decision and highlighting the same jarring discrepancy between the basilica's sumptuous form and the new monument's solemn function. Certainly, there was widespread agreement that Mirabeau's memory should be honoured in some lasting form, but whether this should be in a Panthéon, an Elysium or an urban *place d'émulation* remained a moot point among the Revolution's cultural elite. Far from closing the debate on commemoration, the establishment of the Panthéon merely provoked a deluge of rival projects.

Some were less than inspired. Within a few days of Mirabeau's death, Olympe de Gouges rushed into print with a pamphlet amplifying the sections' demand that the Tribune should be buried on the Champ de Mars, where his august memory would bind the oaths of future federations with a sacred seal.⁸ De Gouges was easily dismissed as an eccentric, but the misgivings of the prize-winning architect, Antoine Vaudoyer, were less readily disposed of, and the concerns raised in his *Idées d'un citoyen français* proved rather more enduring. Appearing shortly after the decree establishing the Panthéon had been passed, Vaudoyer's pamphlet was a wide-ranging indictment of the Assembly's decision. While he admired the deputies' good intentions, he considered them hopelessly misplaced, and his argument opened with the caustic advice that: 'il ne suffit pas en architecture de mettre un nom sur un monument pour lui donner le caractère qu'on désire.'⁹ Isolated from the life of the city, decorated with a plethora of frivolous embellishments, and with its purpose indecipherable to the casual onlooker, Sainte-Geneviève, Vaudoyer concluded, lacked the requisite solemnity needed to foster men of genius. Instead, he proposed to imitate the ancients by transforming the Champs Elysées into a *Voie de l'honneur*, a modern *Via Sacra* lined with simple monuments, 'élevés par la nation aux mânes des

⁷ *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 91, 9 April 1791, p. 643.

⁸ O. de Gouges, *Le Tombeau de Mirabeau*, (s. l., s. d.) B. N. Lb39/ 4784.

⁹ A. Vaudoyer, *Idées d'un citoyen français sur le lieu destiné à la sépulture des hommes illustres de France*, (Paris, 1791) B. N. Lb39/4814, p. 2.

plus zélés serviteurs de la patrie.' Pride of place would go to statues of Voltaire and Rousseau, 'mystérieusement ombragés par les arbres de cette route', where even the most apathetic passer-by could not but yearn to imitate the virtues of these great men.¹⁰ As an alternative to the Panthéon, the *Voie de l'honneur* was hardly inspired, but as a critique of the Assembly's decision, Vaudoyer's analysis was brutally effective, and his reservations found a ready echo a month later, when another architect, Louis-Julien Héron, added his voice to the mounting controversy. Once again, Héron acknowledged that Sainte-Geneviève was a superb structure, but once again, both its style and setting were judged incompatible with its new vocation. Lacking the essential severity of the ancients, Soufflot's elegant facade was deemed too contrived and its décor dismissed as too frivolous to encourage the weighty thoughts and noble deeds of the heroes of antiquity. Even its Corinthian capitals, Héron concluded, lacked the requisite 'caractère mâle, grand et sage' needed to promote true greatness. Instead, he advocated raising statues of those 'qui auront le mieux servi la Nation' along the perimeter of the Champ de Mars in order to inspire the participants of future federations with the view of their image.¹¹ While Vaudoyer and Héron's language was more measured than Prudhomme's and less melodramatic than de Gouges', all four had, in effect, passed the same verdict on the Assembly's decision. Sharing a common desire to create an unenclosed commemorative space where the rituals of the nation would be watched over by the statues of its heroes, each found Sainte-Geneviève sorely wanting.

Some criticism of the Assembly's decision was probably inevitable and Héron's and Vaudoyer's fault-finding may not have been wholly disinterested, work remained scarce for ambitious architects in 1791, but such complaints were too frequent and too enduring to be the result of ambition alone. Rather, the problem was that the conversion of Soufflot's basilica into a temple of memory appeared to run counter to all the accepted wisdom of commemoration in eighteenth-century France. Admittedly, the *Mercure de France* had suggested packing the church's capacious crypt with the tombs of 'savans profondes, poëtes, Orateurs, Artistes célèbres' in 1765, but the *Mercure's* plan to turn Sainte-Geneviève into 'un élysée chrétien' had remained a dead letter until Villette resurrected a much-altered version of the scheme

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 4.

¹¹ L.-J. Héron, *Représentations d'un citoyen à la Nation*, (Paris, 1791) B. N. Lb39/4976, pp. 7 and 4.

in May 1790.¹² In contrast, proposals for a pastoral Elysium, or for the raising of statues on the city's streets had abounded throughout the last decades of the *ancien régime*, and each had its own band of very vocal partisans. From Girardin's Ermenonville to Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's immensely successful *Études de la Nature*, Rousseau's disciples had dreamt of creating a space for commemoration where the sheer instrumentality of didactic art would be tempered by the bucolic delights of *la sensibilité*. By the late 1780s, this arcadian vision of remembrance had become the dominant motif of commemorative aesthetics, but Sainte-Geneviève, disappointingly, possessed no such countrified charms. Nor did it satisfy the architectural *avant-garde* who looked to the awe-inspiring severity of Boullée's cenotaphs and Ledoux's funeral monuments for inspiration. Although initially influenced by Soufflot, the geometrical precision of Boullée's *architecture des ombres* and the stark literalism of Ledoux's *architecture parlante* had clearly moved on from the luminous, almost light-hearted approach to neo-classicism that Sainte-Geneviève represented. Combining the sublime and the sorrowful in a radically new style, their designs had little in common with the idyllic vision of a Girardin or a Bernardin, but there was, nevertheless, a crucial similarity between these otherwise quite distinct approaches to commemoration. Despite their obvious aesthetic differences, both styles shared a common vocabulary of emotional and spiritual transcendence. Each aspired, albeit by different means, to draw the viewer into a contemplative mood, to 'parle au cœur et à l'imagination' by the manipulation of 'des images tristes et sombres'.¹³ For the connoisseur of the 1790s, however, this was an effect that Soufflot's earlier, more playful, style patently failed to suggest. Between these two extremes of commemoration, between Girardin's tearful Arcadia and Boullée's fearsome *architecture ensevelie*, the compromised classicism and over-elaborate embellishments of Sainte-Geneviève seemed distinctly passé.

By 1791, Soufflot's basilica was something of an architectural anachronism. However, such artistic niceties played little part in deciding an Assembly confronted by the urgent need to commemorate Mirabeau with a flourish, but reluctant to choose between such politically resonant spaces as the *place de la Bastille* or the *autel de la*

¹² 'Essai sur les Tombeaux des Grands Hommes dans les Sciences, les Lettres et les Arts', *Mercure de France*, January 1765, pp. 17-20, and Villette, *Lettres Choiesies...*, p. 67.

¹³ Girardin, *De la Composition des Paysages*, p. 44 and Boullée, *Architecture: Essai sur l'Art*, p. 44.

patrie for the purpose. Perhaps these sites carried too much baggage of their own; the memory of Lafayette's triumph during the Federation and the altogether more grisly scenes at the Bastille may explain the deputies' reluctance to entertain these options, but in the end, it was probably the more prosaic matter of money that finally decided the matter. Commissioning a monument flamboyant enough to satisfy public opinion would have been an expensive affair, whereas the nationalisation of church property had conveniently placed Sainte-Genève at the disposal of an appreciative but impoverished nation. All but finished after nearly three decades' work, Soufflot's basilica may not have been the most aesthetically appropriate means of honouring Mirabeau's memory, but it was certainly the best value to hand. For an Assembly that was notoriously indifferent to artistic concerns, but remarkably sensitive to financial considerations, the Panthéon must have seemed like a magnificent bargain.¹⁴

Antoine-Chrysotôme Quatremère de Quincy did not share the deputies' confidence. A pupil of Coustou's, Quatremère was a sculptor by training, but it was as an aesthete that he had made his name in the mid-1780s. Winner of the *Académie des Inscriptions*' essay competition in 1785 with a dissertation on Egyptian architecture and editor of the architectural entries in Panckoucke's *Encyclopédie Méthodique*, Quatremère had, by 1789, established himself as one of the most innovative and influential artistic theorists of his generation.¹⁵ More recently, the publication of his *Considérations sur les arts du dessein* in January 1791 had attracted considerable public attention by raising the question of how the arts should be reformed in order to serve the Revolution.¹⁶ Well-respected and no stranger to controversy, few were better qualified to pass judgement on the Assembly's decree, and Quatremère lost no time in giving the public his verdict on the Panthéon. Reviewing the mounting controversy in mid-April, he left the *Moniteur's* readers in little doubt that the deputies' choice for a national monument was both ill conceived and unenlightened. Sainte-Genève, he suggested disdainfully, was unsuited to its new role 'parce que son caractère intérieur et extérieur contraste trop fortement aux yeux de l'homme de goût avec la destination lugubre d'un hypogée', and the

¹⁴ On the Constituent Assembly's general lack of interest in artistic matters, see A.-C. Thibaut, *Mémoires sur la Convention et le Directoire*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1824) vol. i, p. 70.

¹⁵ For Quatremère's background, see R. Schneider, *Quatremère de Quincy et son Intervention dans les Arts (1788-1830)*, (Paris, 1910)

¹⁶ On the influence of the *Considérations*, see E. Pommier, *L'Art de la Liberté: Doctrines et débats de*

Assembly would be better advised to look to Pisa's well-ordered *Campo Santo* for the ideal modern mausoleum.¹⁷ All told, this was a devastating critique, but despite this, it was to Quatremère that the Parisian authorities looked for advice concerning the implementation of the Assembly's decree, and it was his *Rapport sur l'édifice dit de Sainte-Geneviève* that would decide the future direction of the Panthéon. From the publication of this first *Rapport* in May 1791 to his imprisonment in March 1794, Quatremère presided with autocratic zeal over the single greatest architectural project of the Revolution. Ultimately, the Panthéon was the product of his artistic vision, a vision that would, in many respects, redefine the character of Revolutionary remembrance.

Quatremère had been sceptical of the suitability of the new Panthéon from the very start, but the report he produced for the *département* in May 1791 was little short of damning. A detailed inspection of the building and its finances amounted to a depressing catalogue of managerial incompetence, crippling debts and unfinished work. Even worse, the administration of the building was engulfed by an 'état de désordre et d'anarchie' which allowed the workers on site to exercise 'une parodie absurde de gouvernement, regardent leurs travaux comme leur propriété, le bâtiment comme une république.'¹⁸ Quatremère's verdict on the maladministration of the works was scathing, but in truth, many of his charges seem justified. The first stone had been laid in September 1764, but doubts concerning the stability of Soufflot's design dogged the project for nearly a decade and progress proved painfully slow throughout the 1770s.¹⁹ After Soufflot's death in 1780, construction effectively ground to a halt, so much so that many Parisians despaired of ever seeing the building completed, and while the dome was finally finished in 1790, considerable work remained to be done on both the interior and exterior décor, and there was no money left to pay for it.²⁰ Far from inheriting the finished item, the Assembly was now

la Révolution Française, (Paris, 1991) pp. 65-83.

¹⁷ A. M. no. 103, 13 April 1790, pp. 109-110.

¹⁸ A.-C. Quatremère de Quincy, *Rapport sur l'édifice dit de Sainte-Geneviève fait au directoire du département de Paris*, (Paris, 1791) p. 20.

¹⁹ From the first, Pierre Patte had suspected that Soufflot's design was fundamentally flawed, and the publication of his *Mémoire sur la construction de la coupole, projetée pour couronner la nouvelle église de Sainte-Geneviève* in January 1770 gave rise to rumours that construction was about to be suspended due to the structural inadequacy of the pillars supporting the dome. S-P. Hardy, *Mes Loisirs: Journal d'événements tels qu'ils parviennent à ma connaissance (1764-1773)*, M. Tourneux ed. (Paris, 1912) pp. 169 and 176.

²⁰ In 1781, Hardy expressed the fear that 'la génération actuelle désespérait de voir ce temple

saddled with a bankrupt monolith. Quatremère's conclusion was bleak, but his gloomy assessment did not go entirely unchallenged, and Soufflot le Roman, the original architect's nephew and his successor on the project, published a rejoinder implying that the *Rapport* contained more than its fair share of errors and unfounded charges.²¹ Soufflot's riposte was more than a little self-serving, but it does suggest that Quatremère may have embellished the evidence to suit his own purposes, thereby discrediting the existing administration's ability to carry out the necessary changes, and strengthening his own claim to be the sole saviour of the enterprise. If so, the strategy was an overwhelming success, as Quatremère was appointed *commissaire pour la direction du Panthéon Français* in July, with absolute authority over the artistic direction and financial management of the entire project.²²

Within weeks of his appointment, Quatremère had transformed Sainte-Geneviève from a moribund building site into the largest construction project in Paris. In a summer when most of the city's public works schemes were being unceremoniously shut down, over four hundred craftsmen and labourers were employed to carry out a colossal programme of alterations.²³ However, this metamorphosis came at a considerable cost. While Quatremère's summary dismissal of the existing workforce laid the basis for his troubled relations with both contractors and labourers for years to come, the financial implications of his ambition were even more alarming.²⁴ Belying the Assembly's parsimonious expectations, Quatremère estimated the cost of finishing the building at well over one and a half million *livres*.²⁵ It was a heady sum at a time when revenue was proving elusive, and it took until February 1792 to finally secure

magnifique parvenir à son dernier degré de perfection.' Cited in Burstin, *Le Faubourg Saint-Michel à l'époque Révolutionnaire*, p. 41. For the perilous state of the project's finances, see d'Angiviller's letter to Necker of 6 September, 1790, in A. N. 01/1704.

²¹ *Notes de M. Soufflot, inspecteur des bâtiments de la nouvelle église de Sainte-Geneviève, sur le rapport fait au département relativement à cet édifice, par M. Quatremère de Quincy*, (Paris, s.d.) A. N. AD VIII, no. 34.

²² The appointment was made on the 19th of July, but the full extent of Quatremère's powers only became clear on August 22nd, when the *Directoire du département* granted him complete authority over all contractual matters concerning the Panthéon. A. N. F13/1935, dossier 1.

²³ As one of his first acts, Quatremère sacked the ungovernable rabble of workmen already *in situ*, and began hiring a fresh crew. The existing workforce was invited to re-apply for their posts, but only on the understanding that they would be operating under a very different régime. *Extrait des Registres des délibérations du directoire du département de Paris, le 24 août 1791*, A. N. F13/1935, dossier 1.

²⁴ Rehired on condition that they adhere to a strict new régime, relations with the workers remained fraught under Quatremère's administration, see the complaints about his management presented to the Legislative Assembly in A. N. F 13/1935, dossier 41-2.

²⁵ Quatremère estimated the cost of completion at 1,764,290 *livres*. *Rapport sur l'édifice*, p. 48.

the necessary funding.²⁶ In the meantime, resources were allocated on a month-by-month basis, but despite the delays in settling the details, this massive injection of investment had profound implications for Quatremère's direction of the Panthéon. As the exodus of the artists' normal aristocratic clientele gathered pace, the Panthéon became, quite suddenly, the single most important source of artistic patronage in the country. With two-dozen sculptors working under his command by November 1792, Quatremère's influence on the development of a Revolutionary aesthetic of memory was, in purely economic terms, unsurpassed.²⁷ Election to the Legislative Assembly in September 1791 further enhanced his standing, and his appointment to the Assembly's *Comité d'Instruction Publique* the very next month helped insulate him from the radical *Commune des Arts*' persistent attempts to undermine his position.²⁸ Equipped with the necessary authority and finances and commanding a team of compliant sculptors, Quatremère now possessed an unparalleled opportunity to put avant-garde architectural theory into practice.

The extent of this opportunity was evident from the sheer ambiguity of the decree establishing the Panthéon. Having stipulated that the Latin dedication to Sainte-Geneviève on the frieze should be replaced with a new inscription: *Aux Grands hommes la Patrie Reconnaisante*, the Assembly had nonchalantly left all other matters concerning the new monument to the discretion of the *départemental* authorities. Indeed, one of the chief bones of contention in the controversy that ensued was whether the Panthéon should remain a church or whether its new rôle required its complete deconsecration. Héron, Quatremère and Soufflot had all alluded to the problem in their first broadsides, but the Assembly offered no real guidance on

²⁶ Following Laffon's report for the *Comité des finances* in February 1792, a sum of 1,519,478 livres was allocated over a three-year period. Up to that point, work had been financed on an ad hoc basis by the département, and from August, by a decree granting a series of payments of 50,000 livres per month. A. P. vol. 37, p. 643 and A. N. F13/1935, dossier 1.

²⁷ A. N. F13/1935, dossier 11, concerning the appointment of sixteen new artists to work on the interior, in addition to the sculptors commissioned to work on the exterior décor.

²⁸ For Quatremère's appointment to the Committee in October, see A. P. vol. 34, p. 498. For the various attempts to challenge his authority, see for example, the correspondence between the Parisian deputy, Mulot, Quatremère, and the département concerning Mulot's attempts to inspect Quatremère's alterations, at the behest of the *Commune des Arts*, in A. N. F 13/1935, dossier 9, *Observations relatives à cet édifice de M. Mulot, député de Paris*. For the broader conflict between Quatremère and the *Commune des Arts*, see Y. Luke, 'the Politics of Participation: Quatremère de Quincy and the Theory and Practice of 'Concours Publics' in Revolutionary France 1791-1795', *Oxford Art Journal*, 10, (1987) pp. 15-43.

the matter and the question was left to the departmental authorities.²⁹ Confronted by such legislative uncertainty, Quatremère's response was nothing if not decisive. Taking the Panthéon's new inscription as his starting point, he proposed to re-consecrate the entire edifice exclusively in the name of the *Patrie*. The whole structure, he declared, would be a hymn to this 'divinité nouvelle pour un peuple libre,' and nothing should be allowed to distract from this new vocation.³⁰ This decision had profound artistic implications. To those who advocated either Westminster abbey or the royal mausoleum at Saint-Denis as appropriate models for a national monument, he was scathing. Surveying the chaotic jumble of styles that characterised both abbeys, he rejected their example as architecturally inconsistent and, even worse, as hopelessly out of date.³¹

Of course, there was nothing particularly remarkable about Quatremère's contempt for the gothic. To the eighteenth century eye, medieval tombs and *transi* had little to recommend them, and fashion-conscious clerics had spent the better part of the century removing many such 'monstrosities' from cathedrals and chapels all over France.³² However, if Quatremère's concerns were partly aesthetic, the chief focus of his criticism of Westminster and Saint-Denis was their intolerable conflation of the sacred and the profane. Although expressed in the language of good taste, his critique of the two abbeys was based on a deep-seated mistrust of their capacity to articulate a single, consistent system of meaning, for if these royal sepulchres paid their respects to a distant posterity, they also reminded the onlooker of paradise and purgatory, and recalled his duties to both. With their hands clasped together in prayer, the gisants of Saint-Denis embodied both secular tribute and spiritual devotion, and this assimilation of monument and *memento mori* was anathema to Quatremère. Attacking the abbeys' 'monstrueuse alliance du temple et du sépulture, où toutes les affections se confondent', he insisted that no such moral equivocation be allowed to obscure the purpose of the Panthéon and concluded that it was imperative to 'donner au

²⁹ Héron, *Représentations d'un Citoyen*, p. 1, and *Notes de M. Soufflot*, p. 1. Quatremère's reservations concerning 'l'usage déjà prosrit par la Raison de changer nos temples en catacombes' had appeared in the *Moniteur*. A. M. no. 103, 13 April 1791, p. 109.

³⁰ *Rapport sur l'édifice dit de Sainte-Geneviève*, p. 23.

³¹ *Rapport sur l'édifice dit de Sainte-Geneviève*, p. 30.

³² The interior of Angers' Saint-Maurice, for example, was extensively remodelled over the course of the century to meet contemporary standards of good taste. McManners, *French Ecclesiastical Society under the Ancien Régime*, pp. 32-7.

monument une dénomination qui exclue tout mélange d'idées étrangères.'³³ For this reason, and for this reason alone, Quatremère insisted that every last vestige of the Panthéon's Christian origins should be purged from view and replaced with a new, unambiguous iconography of Revolutionary virtue. It was a daring strategy, both architecturally and politically, and it entailed a mammoth reconstruction, but for Quatremère, there could be no compromise. Only a completely dechristianised Panthéon could fulfil its new destiny as 'un temple consacré à la Patrie.'³⁴ All his subsequent plans were predicated upon this one end: breaking the physical and emotional link between the Church and the commemoration of the Revolution's dead.

In May 1791, Quatremère's *Rapport* represented a radical break with convention. Indeed, just a month after Mirabeau's funeral mass, it flew in the face of all recent precedent, but just as the Parisian authorities began to consider the implications of this report, Voltaire made his controversial return to the capital. Almost overnight, the link between Catholicism and civic ceremony was thrown into question, and the way was suddenly laid open for Quatremère's root-and-branch reappraisal of the relationship between religion and Revolutionary remembrance. Scarcely a week had passed after the contentious festival when the départemental authorities decreed that

L'édifice de la nouvelle église de Sainte Geneviève sera exclusivement consacré aux usages civiques décrété par l'Assemblée Nationale, sans aucun mélange de culte ni de cérémonial religieuse.³⁵

In its insistence on the exclusively civic function of the Panthéon, the département's decision went well beyond the letter of the law originally passed by the Assembly, a point Soufflot le Romain carefully underlined in his *Notes*, but in the venomous atmosphere that followed the triumph of Voltaire, nobody seemed to mind the administrators' excess of enthusiasm.³⁶ In any case, religious property was being shut down and sold off all over France that summer, and Sainte-Geneviève had never even been properly consecrated, so the authorities had few qualms about re-dedicating

³³ *Rapport sur l'édifice de Sainte-Geneviève*, pp. 23-4.

³⁴ Quatremère, *Rapport fait au directoire du département de Paris le 13 novembre 1792, l'an premier de la République Française, sur l'état actuel du Panthéon Français sur les changements qui s'y sont opérés, sur les travaux qui restent à entreprendre, ainsi que sur l'ordre administratif établi par leur direction et la comptabilité*, (Paris, 1792), p. 11.

³⁵ *Extrait des Registres des Délibérations du directoire du département de Paris, le 19 juillet 1791*, A. N. F 13/1935, dossier. 1.

³⁶ As he rightly observed: 'l'Assemblée Nationale n'a prononcé par aucun décret que l'église de Sainte-Geneviève serait uniquement destinée à la sépulture des grands hommes.' *Notes de M. Soufflot*, p. 1.

Soufflot's basilica to the *patrie*. There is even a hint of *schadenfreude* in the curt instruction the département dispatched to the canons of Sainte-Geneviève informing them that they would have to make alternative arrangements for the location of their cherished reliquary.³⁷ Emboldened by an anticipated abundance of *grands hommes*, the new régime had no more need of such outdated curiosities.

The architectural implications of Quatremère's decision were enormous. As a first step, it necessitated the removal of the 'insipide ramas de nuages, d'anges et de rayons' that adorned the pediment, and the replacement of the five bas-reliefs depicting scenes from the lives of Saints Geneviève, Peter and Paul inside the portico.³⁸ Inside, where the ornamentation was even more sumptuous, Quatremère was equally resolute. To the critics who objected that the building's new rationale would necessitate the wholesale destruction of the interior ornamentation, he was unapologetic. The whole nave, he declared, was swarming with endless

bagatelles de fleurs, de bouquets, de chérubin et autres misérables puérilités qui, aux yeux des gens de goût ont toujours déparé ce monument, dont le défaut est d'être surchargée d'un luxe de broderie inutile,

and 'toutes ces pauvretés' would have to be suppressed.³⁹ These changes were spectacular enough in themselves, but they were merely the prelude to a much more far-reaching transformation, one that would re-define the very fabric of the building itself. Even those most sympathetic to Soufflot's style always admitted that 'il ne porte pas le caractère imposant des temples de Jupiter et de Mars, but it was precisely this sense of antique solemnity that Quatremère wished to impose upon the Panthéon.⁴⁰ Not only would the church's cross and bell-towers have to be removed, but the very quality that critics had applauded in Soufflot's original design, its fusion of classical forms with the airy illumination of a gothic chapel was now deemed too frivolous for the exalted rôle of national monument.⁴¹ Recalling the dramatic lighting

³⁷ *Extrait des Registres des Délibérations du directoire du département de Paris, le 19 juillet 1791*, A. N. F 13/1935, dossier 1.

³⁸ *Rapport sur l'édifice dit de Sainte-Geneviève*, p. 25. Quatremère consistently reserved his most scathing criticism for Coustou's bas-relief on the pediment. Having dismissed his former mentor's work scornfully in 1791, he decried it again the following year as 'une des plus médiocres et des plus insipides productions de l'art.' *Rapport fait au directoire du département de Paris*, (1792) p. 24.

³⁹ Letter in response to Mulot's criticisms, 1 August 1792, A. N. F 13/1935, dossier 9.

⁴⁰ A.-F. Peyre, *Observation sur la Restauration des piliers du dôme de Sainte-Geneviève...*, (Paris, 1806) B. N. 4-V Piece-4330, p. 3.

⁴¹ In designing Sainte-Geneviève, Soufflot claimed that his ambition had been to 'réunir... la légèreté de la construction gothique avec la pureté et la magnificence de l'architecture grecque.' Cited in M.

of the Roman original, and perhaps also inspired by the gloomy asceticism of Boullée's recent design for a windowless cathedral, Quatremère resolved to close up the thirty nine windows that illuminated the nave in order to stamp 'un caractère plus sérieux' upon the interior.⁴² These sweeping structural alterations would take well over two years to complete, but they were fundamental to Quatremère's plan to convert Soufflot's 'monument à la perpétuité de la religion chrétienne' into 'un catéchisme figuré des devoirs de l'homme en société.'⁴³

In place of the erased attributes of the Church militant, an entirely new scheme of ornamentation was envisaged for the Panthéon, with the glorification of the *Patrie* as its unique message. Arguing that there could be 'aucun doute sur la destination nouvelle' of the monument, Quatremère instinctively looked to the allegorical style of the ancients as the perfect idiom for Revolutionary virtue.⁴⁴ Only the 'écriture énergétique des signes', he argued, could translate the abstract ideals of *patrie* and *vertu* into a tangible reality, and just as importantly, dislodge the Panthéon from its tainted past. Accordingly, the building was imagined as a vast 'discours allégorique', a monumental essay on the rights and duties of Frenchmen, crowned by the inspirational figure of *la Rénommée* poised upon the dome.⁴⁵ Earnestly inviting the citizen to greatness, Desjoux's *Rénommée* would be the 'péroration' of this immense ensemble, but it was the feminised figure of *la Patrie* (the only female to come even remotely close to the Panthéon for the next two hundred years) that would dominate the entire structure from her perch on the pediment. Flanked by her acolytes, Genius and Virtue, Moitte's *Patrie* was destined to be the building's focal point, a more than worthy substitute for Coustou's garish Adoration of the Cross.⁴⁶ Underneath, in the panels of the pronaos where Soufflot had intended to place the Decalogue, the Constitution and the Rights of Man would be inscribed in tablets of stone. In similar style, the peristyle's five original bas-reliefs would be replaced by a sequence of allegories representing 'd'une part ce que la patrie fait pour l'homme, et de l'autre ce

Perzet, 'Soufflot et l'ordonnance de Sainte-Geneviève', in D. Ternois, (ed.) *Soufflot et l'architecture des Lumières*, (Paris, 1986) p. 20.

⁴² *Rapport sur l'édifice dit de Sainte-Geneviève*, p. 25. For Boullée's design for a windowless cathedral, see his *Architecture: Essai sur l'Art*, p. 39.

⁴³ *Rapport sur l'édifice de Sainte-Geneviève*, pp. 6 and 29.

⁴⁴ A. N. F13/1935, dossier 18. Letter of the 7th September 1793.

⁴⁵ *Rapport sur l'édifice dit de Sainte-Geneviève*, p. 27.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* p. 25.

qui l'homme doit à la patrie.'⁴⁷ As it transpired, these allegories all tended to emphasise the latter element, but, in purely artistic terms, the exterior décor was a model of consistency.

The same abstract logic applied inside as out. The four axes of Soufflot's Greek cross were remodelled in identical fashion to the portico, and dedicated respectively to the arts, the sciences, philosophy and the patriotic virtues, thereby transforming the interior into 'un cours suivi des vertus essentielles de l'homme et du citoyen.'⁴⁸ This unrelenting emphasis on the representation of abstract, disembodied virtue was to be the defining feature of the Panthéon, for even if it was 'un monument consacré aux grands hommes' Quatremère decided that it should be dedicated 'avant tout aux vertus et aux talents qui font les grands hommes.'⁴⁹ Far from cramming the building with gigantic statues such as those Héron and Vaudoyer had proposed for their *al fresco* memorials, the likeness of man was all but banished from Quatremère's monumental hymn to the *patrie*. In a dramatic break with the tradition that lauded the statue of the *grand homme* as capable of 'ranimant en nous ce sentiment d'un noble émulation, qui porte l'âme aux vertus, the images that had underpinned the eighteenth century's 'statuomanie' were all but exiled from the Panthéon.⁵⁰ Grudgingly, Quatremère conceded that a few simple busts or engravings might be retained, but these would be limited to the bare essentials. Haunted by the gisants of Saint-Denis, he was determined that no such absurdities should contaminate the metaphysical purity of his Panthéon. In this Revolutionary inner sanctum, no macabre figures, bizarre costumes or historical curiosities would be allowed to distract the viewer from the exquisite contemplation of transcendent virtue. Thus, the paradox of the Panthéon, indeed its singularity, lies in the essential absence of the great men to whom it was dedicated. While printers struggled to keep up with demand for portraits of popular deputies and the clubs rushed to purchase inspirational busts of the all too human Mirabeau, Quatremère re-invented the Revolutionary hero as a faceless political cipher. Wrenched out of a too contentious history, the *Grand Homme*

⁴⁷ *Rapport sur l'édifice dit de Sainte-Geneviève*, p. 26.

⁴⁸ *Rapport sur l'édifice dit de Sainte-Geneviève*, p. 29.

⁴⁹ *Rapport fait au directoire du département de Paris sur les travaux entrepris, continués ou achevés au Panthéon Français*, (an II) p. 26.

⁵⁰ Falconnet, 'Sculpture', *Encyclopédie*, vol. xiv, p. 834.

became little more than a shadowy accessory, an emasculated pendant to the building's symbolic centre: the *Patrie*.

Quatremère was not the first to espouse what Lynn Hunt has described as 'the revolutionaries' passion for the allegorical' and nor would he be the last, but his three reports on the Panthéon constitute its most ardent declaration.⁵¹ Undoubtedly, there were sound aesthetic reasons for this audacious design. It responded to the need to impose a constant motif, a visual golden thread running through the décor of the Panthéon, and allegory was the obvious means of creating the necessary coherent and harmonious effect. For such an enthusiastic disciple of Winckelmann, the claim that 'les modèles de l'antiquité' were 'le seul garant du bel effet de cette décoration' was hardly a revelation, but this quest for artistic consistency also reflected a very clear political agenda as well.⁵² Quatremère's mission to impose order on the symbolic and ritual eclecticism of Revolutionary remembrance was more than matched by his desire to quell the political anarchy into which France appeared to be descending in the summer of 1791. Aesthetically avant-garde, Quatremère was temperamentally and ideologically a man of the right, and the Panthéon embodied his peculiar juxtaposition of artistic radicalism and reactionary politics.⁵³ With its pronounced emphasis on conservative themes such as 'la législation salulaire' and 'la soumission aux lois', his choice of motifs for the panels in the portico and the naves bears this out only too clearly.⁵⁴ Everywhere one looked in the Panthéon, the message was the same: the turmoil was over, the Constitution in place, and the rule of law established. Far from celebrating the memory of the Revolution, the Panthéon tried to ignore it.

Dedicated to a timeless conception of abstract virtue, the Panthéon was designed to transcend the chaotic flux of Revolutionary history. Its purpose was to exorcise all memory of political conflict, all trace of the ambiguities that enveloped the individual

⁵¹ Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class*, p. 55.

⁵² *Rapport sur les statues qui doivent décorer la colonnade extérieure de la coupole du Panthéon Français, le 7 septembre 1793*, A. N. F13/1935, no. 18. For Winckelmann's influence on Quatremère, see Pommier, *L'Art de La Liberté*, pp. 64-78, and Schneider, *Quatremère de Quincy*, p. 40.

⁵³ Quatremère's politics were nothing if not consistent. In the Legislative Assembly, he invariably voted with the conservative right, and was expelled from the Jacobins in May 1792 on account of his membership of the reactionary Club de Sainte-Chapelle. After his release from prison in the summer of 1794, he rounded off his political career by participating in the royalist uprising of vendémiaire, an IV. Aulard, *Jacobins*, vol. iii, p. 608, and Thibaudeau, *Mémoires*, vol. i, p. 189.

⁵⁴ *Rapport fait au directoire du département de Paris le 13 novembre 1792*, p. 26.

political career, and to offer in its place 'moins les traits de la Révolution, que ses bienfaits, et moins son histoire que sa morale.'⁵⁵ It was a principle that Quatremère returned to again and again. Even as his own predicament became increasingly precarious as the Revolution lurched to the left, his uncompromising vision of the Panthéon grew ever more emphatic. By the beginning of the year II, he could not have been more explicit:

Ce monument, quoiqu'il soit l'ouvrage de la Révolution, ne lui a pas été spécialement consacré. ...il fallait ici chanter ses effets plus que ses actions, et célébrer son règne plutôt que sa conquête. C'était donc à l'allégorie qu'il fallait confier ce soin.⁵⁶

Such apparent assurance betrays the deep-seated uncertainty of an elitist increasingly ill at ease with the democratic drift of Revolutionary politics. For Quatremère, the solution to this drift was to dissolve the link between Revolutionary culture and the personalities and events that propelled the Revolution forward. Celebrating *la patrie* or *la loi* would draw together all decent, right-thinking Revolutionaries in a way that the tarnished reputation of a Mirabeau or the controversial legacy of a Voltaire could never hope to achieve. Detached from the crude cult of personality that enveloped the demagogues of the Assembly, and the vulgar baubles that expressed the public's penchant for political idolatry, commemoration would take on a nobler aspect in Quatremère's temple of memory. No longer prey to the rise and fall of individual reputations, no longer enslaved to the whims of a fickle public, the Panthéon would instead pay homage to the *beau idéal* of an accomplished Revolution. Rising serenely above the turmoil of everyday politics, the Panthéon gloried in the attributes of a nation at peace with itself. It embodied stability and security and proclaimed the consolations of philosophy, but above all, it declared the Revolution over.

From the very start, the Panthéon had been designed as a monumental lesson in the virtues of the Constitution of 1791, but just as it began to take shape, this entire system of ornamentation was rendered obsolete by events. Quatremère's second *Rapport*, delivered in November 1792, bore this dilemma out only too clearly. No longer able to rely on his standing as a deputy to protect him from criticism, which he dismissed disingenuously as 'quelques soupirs de l'aristocratie', Quatremère adopted a defensive tone from the outset. Modestly protesting his 'désintéressement', he

⁵⁵ *Rapport fait au directoire du département de Paris*, (1792) p. 26.

⁵⁶ *Rapport fait au directoire du département de Paris sur les travaux entrepris, continués ou achevés*

reassured the new authorities that everything connected with the Panthéon was 'dans le plus parfait accord avec tous les progrès de la Révolution'.⁵⁷ Accordingly, discretion dictated a series of subtle, but significant, modifications in the meaning attributed to several of the principal embellishments. The centrepiece of Moitte's pediment had originally been entitled simply *la Patrie*, but by November 1792, it had come to represent either 'la République ou la Patrie'.⁵⁸ The distinction is, perhaps, a fine one, but Quatremère's subsequent correspondence with the Commune suggests that a similar symbolic instability threatened to engulf the entire edifice. A few months later, he described the statue of *la loi* in the portico as representing either 'la loi ou la liberté', a metamorphosis which meant little in artistic terms, but which constituted a seismic shift in the political context of April 1793.⁵⁹ While this uncharacteristic ambivalence about the appropriate nomenclature may have been no more than a prudent response to the altered priorities of the new Republic, a symbolic subterfuge that secured Quatremère's position at no great cost, its implications were nevertheless enormous. By admitting, however self-servingly, that the meaning of his allegories was contingent upon political circumstance, Quatremère was forced to abandon the pretensions to immutability that had guided him from the very start. The very possibility of such equivocation, the prospect that such politically polarised terms as *liberté* and *la loi* might be combined in one image, or worse, confused in the public mind may have ensured the future of the project, but only at the expense of conceding the Panthéon's inability to convey a stable system of meaning.

Quatremère's faith in the capacity of allegory to prevail over the volatility of Revolutionary politics had clearly been misplaced, but his awareness of the instability of Revolutionary renown proved rather more astute. Realising that it was

trop hasardeux aussi de confier sitôt à la sculpture plusieurs des faits de la Révolution, que l'histoire n'a pas encore dégagés des personnages qui en furent les instruments

he had sought refuge in abstraction in order to escape the factional tensions that engulfed the reputation of the individual.⁶⁰ A similar realisation would eventually force David to abandon work on his *Serment du Jeu de Paume*. By the winter of 1792, the likes of Bailly or Mirabeau were no longer appropriate subjects for a heroic

au Panthéon Français, (an II) p. 73.

⁵⁷ *Rapport fait au directoire du département de Paris, le 13 novembre 1792*, p. 5.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁵⁹ Letter to the Commune, 12 April 1793. A. N. F13/333a, no. 300.

canvas and the painting was left unfinished, but there the parallels end. Despite this disappointment, the politically more adventurous David confidently persevered with the ideal of the Revolutionary hero, while accepting that this was a constantly evolving species, and his chosen medium displayed the same degree of flexibility. Works such as his *Lepelletier* or *Marat* certainly deployed a sophisticated vocabulary of artistic references and effects, portraying their subjects both as historical figures and as allegorised exemplars of *la vertu opprimée*, but their meaning nevertheless remained accessible to even the most untrained eye. In sharp contrast to this more accommodating approach to commemoration, Quatremère's Panthéon made no such concessions to popular sentiment. Whereas David's martyrs deliberately appealed to the public at large, the Panthéon spoke only to the select few. It wilfully excluded the uninitiated, the men and women who did not realise the significance of a gryphon on the frieze, or appreciate the cadences of 'la langage des artistes'.⁶¹ In place of the thrilling parade of wounded heroes and bloodstained martyrs that David orchestrated to such effect, Quatremère offered up 'les grandes idées de l'antiquité' and 'l'empire de la Loi' for the edification of the masses.⁶²

The suspect enthusiasms of the *menu peuple* received little encouragement in Quatremère's erudite designs. The Panthéon would never pander to the vulgar fancies of the provincial Jacobins and Parisian *sans-culottes* who scrambled for plaster busts of Mirabeau and Marat to decorate their meeting halls and mantelpieces. In the provinces, a portrait of Mirabeau might perform miracles: 'la vue de son image... animera nos successeurs, ainsi que nous, du feu du patriotisme, de l'esprit de la liberté', but the inexpensive, but cherished souvenirs of Messieurs Lucas and Sicardi would find no endorsement beneath the austere gaze of *la Patrie*.⁶³ Having disowned the artefacts of popular commemoration, Quatremère renounced its rituals too. In his obsessive drive to 'détruire tout espèce d'équivoque,' the link between religion and the remembrance of the dead had been the first casualty.⁶⁴ As he later explained: 'mon premier soin, dans la conception de tous les changements...fut donc de faire

⁶⁰ *Rapport fait au directoire du département de Paris*, (an II) p. 72.

⁶¹ *Rapport fait au directoire*, (1792) p. 25.

⁶² *Rapport fait au directoire du département de Paris le 13 novembre 1792*, p. 29.

⁶³ Address from the municipality of Floriac, 21st April, 1791, A. N. C131, no. 462.

⁶⁴ *Rapport sur l'édifice dit de Sainte-Genève*, p. 29.

disparaître tout ce qui pouvait rappeler le caractère d'une église.⁶⁵ As work on the Panthéon neared completion in the winter of 1793, the decision to remove 'les vestiges honteux du fanatisme' coincided nicely with the iconoclastic endeavours of the year II, but in 1791, it had represented a dramatic departure from the norm.⁶⁶ Only a month after the abbé Cerutti had pronounced Mirabeau's elegy in a packed Saint-Eustache, and when churches throughout France were still playing host to hundreds of requiem masses in memory of the Tribune, this was an aesthetically radical, but socially reactionary decision. By choosing to secularise the Revolution's leading *lieu de mémoire*, Quatremère robbed the politically and culturally disenfranchised, the 'passive citizens', of the principal ritual and symbolic idiom they possessed to make sense of the past. For those not privileged enough to share Desmoulin's youthful immersion in antiquity, or fortunate enough to have rounded off their education on the Grand Tour, the Panthéon would be a strange and unsettling space, a curious anticlimax after the pageantry of the procession.⁶⁷ The destitute labourers of the Montmartre public works who had gathered in the church of Saint Paul to mourn Mirabeau would take no solace from the Panthéon. Their heartfelt prayers in memory of their 'meilleur ami' would find no answer in its chilly vaults.⁶⁸

Quatremère's plans silenced the claims of 'ce peuple malheureux... ce peuple toujours victime' to a place in the politics of Revolutionary remembrance.⁶⁹ For generations, these men and women had looked to their priests to consecrate the memory of their dead, but the Panthéon would never echo to their sermons. There was no place here for Claude Fauchet or the abbé Martin, but in truth, the men they had celebrated were just as unwelcome in Quatremère's forbidding 'panthéon philosophique'.⁷⁰ No monument would ever recall the memory of the fallen *vainqueur* here, he had too much respectable blood on his hands, and nor was there any succour for his widow in

⁶⁵ *Rapport fait au directoire du département de Paris*, p. 11.

⁶⁶ *Rapport sur les comptes du Panthéon Française, pour les années de juillet 1791 à juillet 1792 et de juillet 1792 à juillet 1793*, (Paris, 1793) A. N. F13/ 1938, dossier 1.

⁶⁷ 'Je vis avec ces Grecs et ces Romains fameux...' was how he described his classical education at the collège de Louis le Grand, cited in H. Parker, *The Cult of Antiquity and the French Revolutionaries: A Study in the Development of the Revolutionary Spirit*, (New York, 1965 ed.) p. 38.

⁶⁸ *Discours prononcé en l'église de St. Paul au service que les ouvriers des travaux publics des Ateliers de Montmartre, ont fait célébrer en mémoire d'Honoré Riquetti Mirabeau, le 18 avril 1791*, (Paris, s.d.) B.N. Ln27/ 14242, p. 2.

⁶⁹ *Éloge funèbre d'Honoré Riquetti, ci-devant comte de Mirabeau, fait et prononcé par Sima aîné au premier service que les Ouvriers des Travaux Publics ont fait faire à la Paroisse Sainte Marguerite, Fauxbourg Saint-Antoine, le 8 avril 1791*, (s.l. s.d.) Bib. Nat. Ln27 14234 p. 2.

this obscure parody of antique grandeur. The *sectionnaires* and *fédérés* who perished in the overthrow of the monarchy on August 10th went equally unacknowledged in Quatremère's plans, and, perhaps in recognition of this, both the insurrectionary Commune and the Parisian public chose to honour their memory elsewhere in the city.⁷¹ Nor would the anonymous cadavers of Valmy or Jemappes ever find sanctuary alongside Mirabeau and Voltaire. Moitte's Grecian warrior reclining serenely on the pediment would be the sole recompense for their sacrifice. For the men who died in defence of liberty, whether in Paris or on the frontiers, for their widows and their orphans, the Panthéon offered neither consideration nor consolation.

Recognition of their sacrifice would come only after Quatremère's imprisonment in the spring of 1794, when the Convention decreed the erection of an outstandingly incongruous column in the Panthéon inscribed with the names of the dead of August 10th.⁷² A competition for this cenotaph was included in the great *concours* of the year II, but the column, of course, was never raised. By the end of prairial *an III*, when the *Jury des Arts* finally announced the results of the *concours*, the prospect of honouring the people in arms had rather lost its appeal and the *Jury* diplomatically dismissed all the designs for the proposed column as artistically 'défectueux'.⁷³ By June 1795, the politics of Revolutionary remembrance had come full circle; commemoration had given way to contempt, and the *concours* of *an II*, its column and the celebration of the *sectionnaires'* memory were all consigned to the same amnesiac void that Quatremère had allotted them in 1792. In the meantime, however, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that Quatremère viewed such irredeemably plebeian heroes with

⁷⁰ *Rapport sur l'édifice dit de Sainte-Geneviève*, p. 29

⁷¹ On August 12th, the Commune decreed the erection of an obelisk in their honour on the Place des Victoires, and a great funeral festival was held, on Robespierre's prompting, in the Cour du Carrousel two weeks later, while requiems were staged all over Paris in the weeks following the fall of the monarchy.

⁷² On the 28th of germinal, the Convention decreed that a black marble column be raised inside the Panthéon, inscribed with the names of those who fell on the 10th of August in gold letters. A week later, when the *concours* of floréal *an II* was launched, this proposal was modified to honour all the 'guerriers morts pour la patrie', while another column was to be erected on the Place des Victoires specifically in honour of the dead of August 10th. The Commune, meanwhile, immediately set about establishing a definitive list of each section's dead, see Payan's letter to the section Finistère, of the 19 floréal *an II*, B. H. V. P. ms. 807, folio 53. A. N. AD VIII/34, decree of 28 germinal *an II*, Aulard, *Recueil des Actes du Comité du Salut public*, vol. xiii, p. 26, and Guillaume, C. I. P. vol. iv, p. 250.

⁷³ According to the *Jury's Rapport* of the 21st of prairial *an III*, it was decided that raising another column in a building already 'orné d'une forêt de Colonnes' was in poor taste. *Extrait du procès-verbal du Jury des arts ou Rapport fait au Comité d'Instruction publique sur les prix que le Jury a décernés aux ouvrages de Peinture, Sculpture et Architecture soumis à son jugement en vertu de la loi du 9 frimaire an I'an 3eme de la République*, A. N. F17/1057, no. 3.

about as much sympathy as he had shown the workers he so summarily sacked in the summer of 1791. It is pure chance that Quatremère took charge of the Panthéon just as the vindictive clampdown that followed the massacre on the Champ de Mars got under way, but even so, it is a telling coincidence. From the outset, the Panthéon had been conceived in much the same spirit of social and political containment as the nasty little 'terreur tricolore' that Lafayette inflicted on the capital that summer.⁷⁴ Whatever inflections Quatremère later tried to add to it, the Panthéon would always bear the marks of this brutal conception.

Re-inventing Sainte-Geneviève as the symbolic centre of the new order proved to be a much more onerous task than the National Assembly had ever anticipated. For nearly three years, the entire building was little more than a vast construction site, but as the scaffolding came down in the spring of 1794, Quatremère's vision had been all but achieved. Certainly, a few problems remained unresolved. Dejoux's colossal *La Renommée*, for example, never actually graced the dome. Dismissed by the Commune in an *II* as 'extrêmement ridicule', the final bronze was never cast, and the plaster model was left to rot in a municipal warehouse.⁷⁵ The meaning of some of the other statues remained distressingly ambiguous, but in most other respects, the Panthéon was much as Quatremère had envisaged it. And yet, one final element of this great project remained unrealised. From the very first, Quatremère had intended to level the buildings surrounding the Panthéon in order to 'environner son extérieur d'une enceinte plantée d'arbres dont l'ombre silencieuse ajouterait au sentiment religieux du local.'⁷⁶ By 1793, three separate plans to this effect were still being considered, the most ambitious of which involved the demolition of the church of Saint-Étienne-du-Mont, the abbaye de Sainte-Geneviève, and the recently completed École du Droit, but there would be no vast verdant emplacement, 'en forme d'élisée,' around the Panthéon. The enormous cost of compensating the owners of the various *biens nationaux* involved quickly put paid to this idea and these plans came to nothing.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ A. Mathiez, *Le Club des Cordeliers pendant la crise de Varennes et le massacre de Champs de Mars*, (Paris, 1910) p. 150.

⁷⁵ *Journal de la Montagne*, no. 1, 24 brumaire an II, p. 2, and A. M. no. 46, 16 brumaire an IV, p. 361.

⁷⁶ *Rapport sur l'édifice...*, (1791) p.33.

⁷⁷ A. N. F 13/333a, no. 302. Letter from Quatremère to the *procureur-syndic* of the département

This final failure is revealing. Despite the bombast of Quatremère's rhetoric and the sweep of his design, this last, half-hearted attempt to stake a claim to Ermenonville's legacy betrays the same doubts that had plagued the Panthéon from the very start. Similar reservations are implicit in the many prints and paintings that imaginatively re-located the Panthéon from the hubbub of the city to an idealised landscape of rolling glades and cypress groves. One after another, artists obliterated the surrounding buildings in order to envelop the Panthéon in the very Elysium that Quatremère had so obviously failed to deliver, even to the extent of cramming the building's backdrop with Italianate ruins or populating the foreground with buxom peasant lasses bearing pitchers and leading cattle as if to a country fair.⁷⁸ (See Figures 5 and 6) Perhaps these artists wished to concentrate the viewer's attention on the Panthéon by erasing the clutter of the neighbouring buildings; perhaps they simply wanted to spare themselves the effort of portraying that same clutter, but this seems unlikely. These scenes are too contrived, too single-minded in their rejection of the Panthéon's all too urban setting to be the result of indolent fancy alone. On the contrary, these pastoral capricci are testimony to the Panthéon's dull insensitivity to the needs and expectations of an artistic community weaned on the heart-rending imagery of *la sensibilité*. Having shed sweet tears in Girardin's garden of remembrance it was hard for the sensitive soul to come to terms with this glacial pile perched on a windswept hill in a cramped city centre. The confined reality was too grim to depict, too much in opposition to the dreams of a generation.

And so, the critics continued to find fault, endlessly recycling the same misgivings that Quatremère had himself expressed in April 1791, but each year, adding their own discrete variations on a theme. Some shared his thwarted ambition to envelop the Panthéon in greenery, but most looked elsewhere, both within the city and beyond, to plant the poplars and cypresses that invariably marked the place of the dead in

outlining three separate plans for the Place du Panthéon, and their approximate costs. At the very least, Quatremère estimated, the cost of replacing the École de Droit would run to 15,000,000 livres.

⁷⁸ The most extreme example of this trend is Hilaire's 1794 watercolour: *Transfer des cendres de Jean-Jacques Rousseau au Panthéon*, (private coll. Paris.) However, this artistic levelling of the Panthéon's surroundings had been a feature of contemporary engravings from the very start. To cite only two examples from 1791, see the Tuscan landscape and antique ruins in the background of Lagrenée's *Translation des cendres de Voltaire au Panthéon Française*, Musée Carnavalet, G. 21780, and the sparse setting of the Panthéon in anon. *11 juillet, la Rénommée renversant du pied le buste de Louis XVI et planant au-dessus de celui de Voltaire*, B. N., Estampes, coll. de Vinck, no. 4181.

eighteenth century France.⁷⁹ Undoubtedly, the pursuit of personal profit inspired some of these schemes. The destitute citizen Verhelst's design for a ruin-laden 'jardin allégorique' on the Place de la Révolution, for example, was little more than a begging letter masquerading as an architectural blueprint, but others cannot be dismissed so easily, and even those who shared Quatremère's conservative views and comfortable living could not help but suggest alternatives to his disappointing design.⁸⁰ Less than a year after the foundation of the Panthéon, the comte de Kersaint published his own ambitious plans for the regeneration of Paris in line with revolutionary principles. Practical projects for a new *Palais National*, new libraries, galleries and stadia abounded, but the driving force of Kersaint's vision was his conviction that the urban space was a vast canvas upon which the authorities could imprint 'le feu sacré de l'amour de la patrie'.⁸¹ Predictably, remembrance was central to this vast scheme of urban renewal, and Kersaint proposed the erection of great statues of Mirabeau and Rousseau across the city, where 'le bon père, la mère sensible' could lead their son, and await the inevitable question:

"Pourquoi cette pierre?" "Pour vous, mon fils, si vous avez le bonheur de rendre un grand service à votre patrie et de vous distinguer entre ceux qui doivent vivre et mourir pour elle."⁸²

It is a touching scene, full of pathos and heartfelt patriotic zeal; but Kersaint was no firebrand. He would later win notoriety as the only *conventionnel* to resign his seat in protest at the king's trial, but even his veneration for 'le culte des loix' seems to have hesitated before the Panthéon's inhospitable façade.⁸³

Pierre-Gaspard Chaumette, the procurator of the insurrectionary Commune, shared Kersaint's ambitions for the memory of great men, if little else. In July 1793, Marat's murder prompted a chorus of calls for the pantheonisation of the *ami du peuple* but Chaumette rebuffed them all, arguing that:

⁷⁹ In ventôse an II, Dussausoy suggested levelling an area down to the rue St. Jacques, for planting with cypress and poplars. Dussausoy, *Projet d'accessoires du Panthéon Français*, A. N., F14, 187b.

⁸⁰ Verhelst, *Plan allégorique d'un jardin de la Révolution et des vertus Républicaines*, (Paris, 1793) B. N. Lb41/3890. Concerning his being 'dans la plus grande indigence', see his appeals to the Minister of the Interior, and the Committee of Public Safety in pluviôse and prairial, an II. A. N. F13/531.

⁸¹ Kersaint, A.-G.-S., comte de, *Discours sur les Monuments Publics prononcé au conseil du département de Paris le 15 décembre 1791*, (Paris, 1792) p. 10.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

Laissons aux ci-devant nobles déposer les cendres de leurs semblables dans les temples superbes et dans un panthéon somptueux: aux sans-culottes seuls appartient le temple de la nature.⁸⁴

For Chaumette, the Panthéon, even in its newly pared-down incarnation, still reeked of aristocratic opulence rather than the frugal simplicity of republican virtue. And so, Marat was buried in a picturesque grotto in the garden of the Cordeliers, where the trees cast a speckled, flickering light, at once 'douce et tendre', over the 'brute pierre' that marked his grave.⁸⁵ Admittedly, this idyllic effect had been engineered at considerable expense by the architect Martin, but both this faux-natural setting and the arboreal 'espèce de reposoir dressé au jardin du Luxembourg' in honour of the slain deputy suggest that the Panthéon held few charms for Marat's *sans-culotte* admirers.⁸⁶ They too looked to a more variegated architecture of memory than the Panthéon would ever allow, and as the Terror ran its course, the popular commemoration of Marat's memory paid no great heed to Quatremère's inflexible aesthetic. Certainly, calls for Marat's pantheonisation rang out throughout the year II, but the *sans-culottes'* insistence that the *ami du peuple* should receive the ultimate accolade was less an act of faith in the Panthéon than a demand for recognition in the face of *robespierriste* revulsion for his memory.⁸⁷

A year later, Rousseau's pantheonisation was marked by the same ambiguities. The entire spectacle was a shameless piece of political opportunism, but even the thermidorians adopted an uncharacteristically apologetic tone when justifying their decision to uproot *l'Homme de la Nature* from his beloved Ermenonville. After three years of procrastination, reconciling Jean-Jacques' reputation for rustic simplicity with the urbane sophistication of the Panthéon required some subtlety, but Lakanal's report on the festival went beyond mere sophistry when confronted with the problem of the poplars that ringed Rousseau's grave. Admitting that 'l'idée de cet arbre mélancolique est devenue en quelque sorte inséparable de celle de son tombeau',

⁸⁴ *Journal de la Montagne*, no. 46, 16 July 1793, p. 261.

⁸⁵ *Journal de la Montagne*, no. 48, 19 July 1793, p. 278. For a particularly lyrical description of the tomb in the Cordeliers, see the *Feuille de Salut Public*, no. 19, 19 July 1793, p. 3.

⁸⁶ For the design of Martin's tomb in the Cordeliers, see the files on its construction in A.N. M 665 and the engravings in the B. N. Cabinet des Estampes, coll. de Vinck, no. 5321 and 5323. For the shrine in the Luxembourg, see J.-G. Wille, *Mémoires et Journal de J.-G. Wille, graveur du Roi*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1857) vol. ii, p. 385, and the *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 211, 3 August 1793, p. 61.

⁸⁷ From the outset, Robespierre had tried to put off talk of Marat's pantheonisation, a point we shall return to in chapter V. Aulard, *Jacobins*, vol. iv, pp. 303-4.

Lakanal concluded his report with a promise, as clumsy as it was insincere, that the Panthéon would finally receive its 'vaste plantation d'arbres.'⁸⁸ It goes without saying that the tight-fisted thermidorians had no intention of ever paying for this, but Lakanal's undertaking, specious though it was, speaks volumes of the Revolutionaries' persistent misgivings before the spectacle of the Panthéon, and two weeks later, the parade that delivered Rousseau to his final resting place bore much the same air of vaguely embarrassed duplicity. Both the artificial *île des peupliers* raised to receive his remains in the Tuileries and the procession that led from it were engulfed in effusively pastoral motifs, as if to camouflage the gloom of Jean-Jacques's ultimate destination.⁸⁹

In the years that followed, a combination of political circumstance and structural instability did little to enhance the Panthéon's cause. Paradoxically, Mercier led the attack in *an IV*. Playing devil's advocate in a debate on the pantheonisation of Descartes in May 1796, the one-time champion of Rousseau's re-interment now condemned the entire edifice in no uncertain terms. The Panthéon, he argued, had been 'souillé' by the sight of so many funeral cortèges depositing their contentious cargos in its crypt, only to see their charges ignominiously bundled out the back door after a new *journée* launched a new order and a new need to forget. After the Terror, it had become clear that immortality was not so easily conferred nor so obviously laudable, and Mercier wisely suggested a cooling off period before the Republic dared dabble again in the politics of posterity.⁹⁰ With only Voltaire and Rousseau still in place after the dramatic exodus of pluviôse *an III*, this was probably the most sensible policy to hand, but worse was still to come, because Mercier's onslaught coincided with the resurgence of concerns about the Panthéon's safety prompted by the appearance of cracks in the pillars supporting the dome.⁹¹ Pierre Patte's fears concerning Soufflot's design had finally come true, and by the end of 1796, the

⁸⁸ As if to add insult to injury, Lakanal went on to suggest that Rousseau's stay in the Panthéon should only be a temporary measure while this 'bois auguste' was being planted. Lakanal, *Rapport sur J. J. Rousseau, fait au nom du Comité d'Instruction Publique...*, (Paris, *an III*) pp. 11-2.

⁸⁹ On its arrival from Ermenonville, Rousseau's coffin was housed on a specially constructed island in the Tuileries as a prelude to the parade. For an account of this scene, see the description in the *Journal des Hommes Libres*, 23 vendémiaire *an III*, and Hubert Robert's watercolour, *Apothéose de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, National Gallery of Ireland.

⁹⁰ L.-S. Mercier, *Discours de L.-S. Mercier prononcé le 18 floréal an IV sur René Descartes*, (Paris, *an IV*) B. L. F1085.12, p. 13. We will return to this debate in more detail in chapter VI.

⁹¹ The architect Boulland was the first to alert the public to 'le peril imminent de cet édifice.' Boulland, *Les Désastres du Panthéon Français*, (Paris, *an IV*) B. L., F. R. 236.22, p. 1.

scaffolding was up once more.⁹² Surveying the scene that winter, Mercier mocked the colossal pretension of this costly blunder: at best, he suggested mischievously, it would make an agreeable ruin.⁹³

Discredited, both politically and structurally, the Panthéon was in poor shape as the Directory turned its attention once more to the old problem of public cemeteries and how best to honour the memory of the dead. Hot on the heels of Mercier's caustic report, Roederer presented an equally trenchant *Mémoire* to the *Institut* insisting that 'la place de morts est dans un bois sacré... non sous les voûtes insensibles', and one after another, the worthies of the *Institut* followed his lead.⁹⁴ La Revellière-Lepeaux's solution to the problems of remembrance in Directorial France was typical. Lamenting the reasoning that confined the illustrious dead to a cramped crypt in a noisy city, he proposed yet another elysium 'sous la voûte des cieux, au sein de la majesté des forêts... en un mot dans une enceinte pittoresque, variée et tranquille.'⁹⁵ Uninspired though it was, La Revellière's ersatz Ermenonville was the characteristic response of a generation of revolutionary savants when confronted by the Panthéon, but a year earlier, Daubermesnil had captured the prevailing mood of baffled disenchantment better than any other.⁹⁶ Standing before this 'frêle' structure, remembering the overpowering emotions he had experienced on visiting the *île des peupliers* many years before, he asked forlornly: 'pourquoi ne les ai-je pas ressentis en parcourant cet édifice national?'⁹⁷

From Kersaint and Chaumette to Mercier and Daubermesnil, a consensus had emerged. Despite their many differences, constitutional monarchists, terrorist zealots

⁹² In November 1796, one English visitor found the Panthéon already teeming with workmen and scaffolding, and it was still in the same state during Francis Blagdon's visit five years later. Anon., *A Sketch of Modern France, in a series of letters to a lady of fashion, written in the years 1796 and 1797*, (London, 1798 ed.) p. 140, and F. W. Blagdon, *Paris as it was and as it is, or A sketch of the French capital, illustrative of the effects of the revolution... in a series of letters, written by an English traveller, during the year 1801-2*, 2 vols. (London, 1803) vol. ii, p. 138.

⁹³ Mercier, *Le Nouveau Paris*, (Paris, 1994 ed.) p. 140.

⁹⁴ *Des Institutions funéraires convenables à une République qui permet tous les cultes et n'en adopte aucun: Mémoire lu par Roederer, dans la séance publique de l'Institut National des Sciences, le 15 messidor, an IV*, (Paris, an IV) B. L. F1085.16, p. 13.

⁹⁵ La Reveillière-Lepeaux, *Du Panthéon et d'un Théâtre National*, (Paris, an VI) B. L. F. 522. 12, p. 7.

⁹⁶ Jacques de Cambry's plans for a wooded *Champ de Repos* is another in this vein. J. de Cambry, *Rapport sur les sépultures présenté à l'administration central du Département de la Seine*, (Paris, an VII) B. L. 559*.b.16, no. 3.

⁹⁷ F.-A. Daubermesnil, *Rapport fait au nom d'une commission spéciale sur les inhumations, Conseil des Cinq-Cents, le 21 brumaire, an V*, (Paris, an V) B. N. Le43-573, p. 9.

and Directorial ideologues could all find common cause in repudiating Quatremère's creation. However, the most decisive evidence for the political and emotional impoverishment of the Panthéon is to be found in the well-stocked files of the *Comité d'Instruction Publique*. This seemingly endless inventory of well-meaning designs for never-executed monuments and unbuilt *places d'émulation* is a veiled indictment of the Panthéon's failure to win the affections of the very public it was designed to inspire. Whether the authors of these proposals were simply oblivious to its existence or wilfully ignored it as inadequate to the task at hand is impossible to say, but the mere fact that they felt the need to submit their own alternatives is instructive. Soufflot's over-elaborate style no longer harmonised with the educated public's taste for the sublime, but the reasons for the Panthéon's failure to engage public opinion owe as much to Quatremère's modifications as they do to the original character and locale of the building. By all but evicting the bust and the statue from the precincts of the Panthéon, his design ran contrary to the logic that had impelled all other attempts to commemorate the Revolutionary dead. Simple or ornate, figurative or allegorical, the common denominator of all these rival projects was their concern that the image of the great man should be accessible to all, not confined in the shadows of that cavernous crypt.

The visibility, indeed the prominence, of the statue of the *grand homme* was its *raison d'être*: it was there to be seen and to inspire. Whether these sculptures were assembled in a leafy Elysium or scattered across the city was an incidental detail, but it was essential, as Mopinot de la Chapotte had argued in 1792, that they should be 'continuellement sous les yeux des hommes de tous les états et de tous les ages.'⁹⁸ The next year, a few days after Marat's murder, Jean-Charles Laveaux made precisely the same point when he denounced the practice of 'renfermer dans des caveaux et entre des masses de pierres les cendres des grands hommes qui ont bien mérité de la Patrie.'⁹⁹ Having repudiated the Panthéon, he resurrected the idea that the Revolution's heroes should be laid to rest around the Champ de Mars where, yet again, the proud father could lead his son (it was always a son) 'de monument en monument', recounting, at each step, the heroic achievements of the Republic. Four years later, Arsène Thiébaud looked to the Tuileries for his own idealised garden of

⁹⁸ A. Mopinot de la Chapotte, *Adresse à l'Assemblée Nationale*, (Paris, 1792) B. N. Lb39/5844, p. 9.

⁹⁹ *Journal de la Montagne*, no. 48, 19 July 1793, p. 277.

remembrance, but the fundamental principle, and the parable of pedagogic parenthood, remained essentially unchanged.¹⁰⁰ While his *Réflexions sur les Pompes funèbres* waxed lyrical about the moral potential of commemoration, Thiébaut nevertheless kept a keen eye on practicalities, insisting that 'l'entrée soit publique' if this potential was to be fully realised.¹⁰¹ From Mopinot in 1792 to Thiébaut in 1797, the point was the same: the memory of the *Grand Homme* could work wonders, but only if it was enshrined in a space that was accessible in both symbolical and practical terms. The Panthéon, however, was a closed, uninviting space, and its moral message lay entombed in a crypt that offered neither incentive to the doting parent of Revolutionary myth nor inspiration to their improbably impressionable child. As such, it could never have the same effect on the spectator as a statue in a city square, or a memorial in a public park. As Laveaux had argued in 1793, it was imperative that such monuments be 'exposés à tous les yeux', and the failure to do this was to prove the most persistent and the most telling of all the criticisms of the Panthéon.¹⁰²

In the long term, the Panthéon remained unloved and unappreciated. Having already scorned the vernacular of popular commemoration, Quatremère's failure to win *bien-pensant* opinion over to his more esoteric idiom was poor reward for three years of unrelenting effort, but it was only to be expected. In the meantime, swathed in scaffolding and smothered in the dust and débris of the construction site, the Panthéon was, to all intents and purposes, *hors de combat* until the spring of 1794.¹⁰³ And yet, even as this protracted metamorphosis took place, the Revolution continued to remember its dead. In March 1792, the mayor of Étampes, Guillaume Simonneau, joined the ranks of the Revolution's heroes, and August 10th added yet more to the mounting death toll. 376 *sectionnaires* and *fédérés* perished in the Cour du Carrousel

¹⁰⁰ As Thiébaut explained: 'c'est là où la mère conduira son fils pour corriger ses vices..., c'est là où l'aspect de leurs bustes servira de véhicule à l'émulation et à l'amour de la Patrie...'. A. Thiébaut, *Réflexions sur les Pompes funèbres*, (Paris, frimaire, an VI), p. 10.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. p. 9.

¹⁰² *Journal de la Montagne*, no. 48, 19 July 1793, p. 277.

¹⁰³ A few festivals wound their way towards the Panthéon in the intervening period, most notably Lepeletier's funeral in January 1793, but work resumed immediately afterwards, and the building remained closed to the public. For the temporary suspension of work for Lepeletier's funeral and for Quatremère's ongoing struggle to keep sightseers off the site, even in ventôse *an II*, A. N. F13/1935, no. 65, and F13/333a, no. 490.

that day, and their sacrifice demanded all the honours that the new Republic could bestow. Their adversaries were, of course, quickly forgotten by the Revolution. The Swiss guards and sundry gentlemen who died defending the monarchy were hastily bundled off on carts to communal graves on the outskirts of the city, and the same fate befell the fourteen hundred victims of September's prison massacres.¹⁰⁴ Their memory would be hallowed in the martyrology of throne and altar, but the evolution of this tradition is not our concern here. Instead, most Revolutionaries were content, like Danton, to draw 'un voile religieuse sur tous ces événements'.¹⁰⁵ To those who were not so inclined, and even then, their main concern was with the *septembriseur* rather than his victim, Robespierre offered the following warning in November: 'la sensibilité qui gémit presque exclusivement pour les ennemis de la liberté m'est suspecte.'¹⁰⁶ In Robespierre's Republic, sentiment was selectively rationed. It paid no heed to the priests and beggars who were butchered in the Carmes and the Abbaye or the streetwalkers who were hacked to death in La Salpêtrière, but it venerated the 'patriotes' who had been 'immolés par la tyrannie.'¹⁰⁷ The following January, Robespierre's fellow *conventionnel*, Michel Lepeletier de Saint-Fargeau, joined that august assembly after he had been murdered for his regicide vote. Simonneau, the dead of August 10th and Lepeletier, each died in the name of the Revolution and each was honoured by it. Both in Paris and the provinces, funeral ceremonies were staged, parades decreed and speeches rehearsed in their honour. As these processions unfurled, the face of Revolutionary remembrance was to change beyond recognition.

Guillaume Simonneau was shot on 3 March 1792 while attempting to put down a market riot in his hometown.¹⁰⁸ The news reached the Assembly three days later, and prompted immediate action. Six hundred Guardsmen and four hundred troops were immediately dispatched to Étampes to re-establish the rule of law in the Seine-et-Oise. Almost as an afterthought, the deputies decreed the erection of a simple monument to mark the spot where this 'patriote estimable' had met his fate.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ The Champs-Élysées section was giving the thankless task of burying the Swiss. F. Braesch, *La Commune du dix août 1792*, (Paris, 1911) p. 345. For the equally gruesome disposal of the victims of the September massacres, see Béricourt's *Enlèvement de Cadavres*. Musée Carnavalet, inv. D.4460.

¹⁰⁵ Aulard, *Jacobins*, vol. iv, p. 534-40

¹⁰⁶ Robespierre issued this warning on November 5, 1792. *A. P.* vol. lii, p. 162.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ For the background to Simonneau's death, see D. Hunt, 'The People and Pierre Dolivier: Popular Uprisings in the Seine-et-Oise Department (1791-1792),' *F.H. S.* no. 11, (1975) pp. 184-214.

¹⁰⁹ *A. P.* vol. xxxix, p. 428.

Details for this very modest memorial were finalised two weeks later, but order having been swiftly restored and the guilty brought to justice, the deputies soon lost interest in this isolated, but unexceptional, episode of rural disorder and its equally unremarkable victim.¹¹⁰ Two months later, however, Simonneau's memory reappeared on the political agenda with a suddenness that betrays the insincerity of the deputies' motives. In the intervening weeks, the capital had been convulsed by the controversy surrounding the return of the soldiers of Châteaueux from the prison hulks at Brest.¹¹¹ Less than two years after it had first served as an excuse for an acrimonious festival, the massacre at Nancy had resurfaced to poison Parisian politics just as Prudhomme had predicted it would. Welcomed on the left as a triumph, but denounced on the right as a travesty, the *Fête de la Liberté* was little more than a ceremonial settling of old scores. As the Swiss soldiers marched in glory through Paris on March 15th, the Jacobins finally took their revenge on Lafayette and all that he stood for, and declared the fête to mark the 'enterrement du despotisme militaire'.¹¹² Billed variously as the 'coup de grace des Feuillants' or 'cette pompe vexatoire, extravagante, criminelle', a bitter pamphlet war enveloped the Festival of Liberty with predictable results.¹¹³ Outraged at the adulation of a regiment that many still considered guilty of murderous mutiny,¹¹⁴ conservative Parisian opinion retaliated by resurrecting the almost forgotten Simonneau as its own martyr to Revolutionary licence.¹¹⁵

As the Assembly's resident expert on all things commemorative, Quatremère was appointed to arrange the ensuing festival in memory of Simonneau.¹¹⁶ With a characteristic preference for the general over the particular, he designed the fête as a

¹¹⁰ See Jean Debry's report on the monument on the 18th March in Guillaume, *C. I. P.* vol. i, p. 153.

¹¹¹ On the 1st of December, the deputies reluctantly extended the general amnesty of September 14 to the Swiss, but the king waited until February 12, 1792 to sanction the decree. *A. P.* vol. xxxvi, p. 357.

¹¹² For Robespierre, the fête's purpose was self-evident: 'Cette fête qu'on prépare peut être vraiment utile à la liberté... [mais] C'est La Fayette que nous avons ici à combattre...', Aulard, *Jacobins*, vol. iii, p. 466. Another anonymous pamphleteer put an identical gloss on the day's events. *Enterrement du despotisme militaire ou funérailles des amis de la Contre-Révolution*, (Paris, s. d.) B. N. Lb39/5882.

¹¹³ *Coup de grâce des Feuillants ou les soldats de Châteaueux traités comme ils le méritent*, B. N. Lb39/5875, and O. de Gouges, *Grande éclipse du soleil jacobine de la lune Feuillantine*, B. N. Lb39/10533, p. 6.

¹¹⁴ As one Guards battalion insisted: 'une amnistie n'est qu'un pardon, et le pardon suppose toujours le délit. Ils ne sont pas absolus, il ne sont pas justifiés.' *Pétition au département de Paris par les Citoyens-Soldats du bataillon des Filles Saint-Thomas*. B. N. ms. fonds français 6574, folio 123, p. 6.

¹¹⁵ On the 6th of May, a petition bearing 836 signatures was presented to the Assembly demanding a fête in honour of the brave 'citoyens qui meurent pour la loi.' *A. M.*, no. 128, 7 May 1792, p. 314.

¹¹⁶ Guillaume, *C. I. P.*, 7 May 1792, vol. i, p. 273.

triumph of the Law rather than a tribute to the murdered mayor. Simonneau's death may have furnished a pretext for the parade, but once preparations got under way the memory of the ill-fated mayor was quickly overshadowed by the festival's real object: a vast 'rappel à l'ordre'.¹¹⁷ With Jacques Roux fulminating against 'la lâcheté des fonctionnaires publics, les injustices des magistrats, les machinations des ministres' from pulpits all over Paris, Quatremère most likely deemed such a call long overdue, but others saw it differently, and his plans were widely perceived as an attempt to 'humilier, de mater le peuple'.¹¹⁸ The difference in emphasis was probably one of perspective alone. Order and subjugation were never very far apart in Quatremère's political lexicon, and everything in the procession he designed for the 3rd of June was geared towards glorifying the forces of law and order while simultaneously putting the rabble in its place. On hearing Quatremère's report, the radical deputy Antoine Albitte grumbled that the planned cortège savoured more of the 'drapeau rouge et de la loi martiale que d'une fête publique' and in the event, he was proved right.¹¹⁹

With its neatly ranged clusters of Guardsmen and troops, judges and magistrates, the *Fête de la Loi* positively bristled with bayonets and badges of office. Whereas previous commemorations had united officials and *clubistes*, soldiers and civilians in a common will to remember, civil society was conspicuous by its absence from what Robespierre damningly dismissed as a 'fête des fonctionnaires publics'.¹²⁰ Robespierre was hardly an impartial observer, but a host of banners and floats suggests that his assessment was not too far off the mark. Of the thirteen ensigns on display, only one referred to Liberty, and even this was buried in the hopelessly unappealing slogan: 'la Loi, Liberté, Égalité, Propriété,' while others declared insistently that all men were 'esclaves de la loi'.¹²¹ Interspersed among these authoritarian banners, an open book of the law, the sword of the law, and a sceptre-wielding statue of *la Loi*, all proclaimed the imperium of the authorities with the same

¹¹⁷ Quatremère, *Rapport sur les honneurs à accorder à la mémoire de J. G. Simonneau* in Guillaume, *C. I. P.* vol. i, p. 284-5.

¹¹⁸ J. Roux, *Discours sur les moyens de sauver la France et la liberté, prononcé dans l'église métropolitaine de Paris, dans celles de St.-Eustaches, de Sainte-Marguerite, de Saint-Antoine et de Saint-Nicolas-des-Champs*, (Paris, 1792) pp. 11-2, and *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 152, p. 451.

¹¹⁹ *A. M.* no. 134, 13 May 1792, p. 369.

¹²⁰ *Le Défenseur de la Constitution*, no. 4, 7 June 1792, p. 192.

¹²¹ *Ordre, Marche et Détail de la Cérémonie décrétée par l'Assemblée Nationale, consacrée au respect de la Loi, et dans laquelle on honora la mémoire de Jacques Guillaume Simonneau, mort à son poste pour la défense de la Loi, laquelle aura lieu le Dimanche 3 juin 1792*, (Paris, 1792) B.N. Lb39 10602.

intransigent zeal.¹²² Solemnity and majesty were the watchwords of the procession, but the entire effect was sabotaged by one absurd innovation. In the midst of so many imposing emblems of authority, a huge papier-mâché fish, a gigantic 'espèce de requin' was born aloft on a pole. It was intended to represent 'Respect à la loi', but Quatremère's 'gueule béante armée de dents' provoked a range of reactions ranging from confusion to contempt. Most of all, however, it was greeted with mockery.¹²³ While ridicule was only to be expected from the left, even the most sympathetic observers were forced to admit that this particular idea 'n'a paru ni assez claire, ni assez heureuse'.¹²⁴ Quatremère's giant shark was an easy target for abuse, but the incomprehension that enveloped it was symptomatic of the public's bewildered reaction to the parade as a whole. With one notable exception, the same air of ambiguity dogged the procession from start to finish. A statue of Minerva was widely mistaken for the Virgin, while another depicting *la Loi* was generally thought to represent *Liberté*, a mix-up which produced a few desultory cheers, but completely undermined the festival's guiding principle.¹²⁵

No such uncertainty, however, surrounded the meaning of the panels that decorated *la Loi*'s carriage on its route through the city. Ever since news of the mayor's death had reached Paris, it had been common knowledge that Simonneau had been shot, but during the festival, the bas-reliefs illustrating his assassination depicted him being attacked by a pike-wielding mob. Doubtless, a degree of poetic licence was acceptable on such occasions, but given the pike's symbolic importance to the popular movement in Paris, Quatremère's misrepresentation of Simonneau's death was widely perceived to be a deliberate attempt to associate the murderous events in Étampes with the current revival of radical fortunes in the capital.¹²⁶ In the midst of so many other features, this was a small but telling detail, and the left seized upon it as

¹²² The fullest description of the parade is in the *Chronique de Paris*, no. 155, 2 June 1792, pp. 614-6.

¹²³ According to Prudhomme, it 'fit rire tout le monde', while Gorsas sarcastically left it up 'à nos lecteurs à découvrir le mystère de ce signe.' *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 152, p. 452, and *Courrier des 83 départements*, 4 June 1792, p. 55.

¹²⁴ *Corr. Litt.* vol. xvi., p. 141.

¹²⁵ Quatremère's report on the festival had been quite specific in distinguishing between the celebration of the law and the celebration of liberty: 'Sans doute que lorsque la liberté sera consolidée, vous vous empresserez et vous consacrerez une fête générale en commémoration de tous les événements, de toutes des actions célèbres qui auront contribué à son affermissement, mais vous ferez des fêtes en l'honneur de la liberté, d'autres en honneur de la loi.' *A. M.* no. 134, 13 May 1792, p. 368.

¹²⁶ On the importance of the pike as the pre-eminent symbol of popular activism, see the article: 'Des piques' in the *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 136, 18 February 1792, p. 297.

evidence to the festival's real purpose, to discredit the democratic movement as a threat to social order.¹²⁷ Unsurprisingly, given this combination of social chauvinism, symbolic obscurantism and political duplicity, the festival was poorly received. The Feuillant press laboured to decipher the public's muted reaction as a respectful silence, but the reality was far less palatable.¹²⁸ At best, as Dulaure noted sardonically, the people 'l'a vu sans enthousiasme comme sans dédain'; at worst, they simply refused to attend.¹²⁹ Only a handful of Guards from the Saint-Marcel battalion agreed to take their place in the parade, and even the most favourable reports admitted that attendance was markedly down on the *Fête de la Liberté*.¹³⁰ Having translated the aesthetic principles governing the Panthéon into ceremonial form, Quatremère's venture into the world of ritual accomplished what few other Revolutionary festivals had ever managed to achieve. Profoundly divisive and utterly incomprehensible at one and the same time, the *Fête de la Loi* was little short of a shambles.

Quatremère's festival was a fiasco, but in the provinces, Simonneau's memory was celebrated in quite different style over the course of the spring. In Blois, Henri Grégoire led the mourners in the cathedral 'au nom de la religion et de la patrie', and *fonctionnaires* and *sociétaires* across the kingdom followed his example wholeheartedly.¹³¹ Long before it had ever felt the need to stage the *Fête de la Loi*, the Assembly had called for a period of national mourning for Simonneau, and the provinces responded to the deputies' suggestion with alacrity.¹³² On 21 March, for example, the Jacobins of Lyon's section Porte-Froc staged a particularly elaborate ceremony in the cathedral of Saint-Jean, where the nave was adorned with

un sarcophage imposant, flanqué de cariatides vivants d'un genre neuf, et de l'effet le plus heureux, surmonté d'une urne qui entourait l'écharpe attributive de l'immortel magistrat.¹³³

'Cariatides vivants' apart, there were few other novelties on display as provincial revolutionaries organised a multitude of masses and religious processions in memory

¹²⁷ According to the *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 152, p. 451, this was 'un tableau calomnieux', while David furiously denied any connection with 'le bas-relief imposteur', in an open letter to the *Courrier des 83 départements*, 9 June 1792, p. 131.

¹²⁸ See, for example, Roucher's commentary in the *Journal de Paris*, 5 June 1792, pp. 633-4.

¹²⁹ *Thermomètre du Jour*, no. 157, 5 June 1793, p. 523.

¹³⁰ For Charles Alexandre's despondent attempts to assemble his men in the rue Mouffetard on the day of the parade, see 'Fragments des Mémoires de Ch.-A. Alexandre', *A. h. R. f.*, no. 24, (1952) pp. 113-251, pp. 163-65. For the poor attendance at the fête, see the *Feuille Villageoise*, no. 38, p. 288.

¹³¹ Henri Grégoire, *Discours prononcé dans l'église cathédrale de Blois... au service célébré pour J.-G. Simonneau, assassiné le 3 mars 1792, pour avoir défendu la Loi*, (Blois, 1792) B. N. Ln39/5957, p. 4.

¹³² *A. M.* no. 68, 8 March 1792, p. 566.

of the murdered mayor. In the Limousin, the Jacobins of Tulle learnt of Simonneau's death on 18 March and immediately began preparations for a 'service solennel' in the cathedral, with the bishop and the local authorities in attendance.¹³⁴ Neighbouring Cahors did likewise, as did Valenciennes and Montdidier in the north and Dijon and Colmar in the east, but the most fervent devotees of Simonneau's memory were to be found among the embattled local authorities of the troubled Île-de-France.¹³⁵ In Versailles, Nemours, Beaumont-sur-Oise, Orleans, and, of course, Étampes itself, clubs and town councils organised their own requiem masses, packing churches draped in mourning to lament the loss of one of their own. With dire warnings that 'toutes les propriétés, tous les pouvoirs sont menacés' ringing in their ears, the celebration of Simonneau's memory presented a timely opportunity to rally the troops (quite literally in the case of Étampes' exceptionally martial fête) with a resounding call to order.¹³⁶

Simonneau may have been unknown and undistinguished before his death, but the accolades that accompanied these services were fulsome nevertheless. Occasional jeremiads concerning 'la fureur atroce d'une multitude aveugle' betrayed the mounting frustration of provincial officialdom before a rising tide of peasant discontent, but in the main, most orators preferred to stress the positive aspects of the mayor's civic zeal.¹³⁷ For Henri Grégoire, Simonneau's heroic stand was not simply a sterling example of patriotic devotion to duty, but a Christ-like act of self-sacrifice:

La perfection de la charité est de sacrifier sa vie pour le salut de ses frères. Celui qui nous a donné le précepte nous a laissé son exemple, et dans Simonneau, l'homme-Dieu a trouvé un imitateur.¹³⁸

Few of Grégoire's confreres went quite this far, but biblical allusions nevertheless abounded that spring. Pilat, episcopal vicar of the Loiret, compared 'le généreux

¹³³ A. M. no. 93, 2 April 1792, p. 10.

¹³⁴ V. Forot (ed.) *Le Club des Jacobins de Tulle*, (Tulle, 1912) p. 176.

¹³⁵ For Cahors, see Forot, *Le Club des Jacobins de Tulle*, p. 190, for Colmar, Valenciennes, and Montdidier, see the *Courrier des 83 départements*, 1 April 1792, p. 4, and 6 April, p. 87.

¹³⁶ For the ongoing disorders in the Seine-et-Oise, see Lebrun's report in, A. P. 6 March 1792, vol. 39, pp. 413-4. The congregation in Étampes was composed almost exclusively of local officials and Guardsmen. *Éloge funèbre de Jacques Guillaume Simonneau maire d'Étampes. Impitoyablement massacré dans la journée de 3 mars 1792 ...*, (Étampes, 1792) B.N. Ln27/19006.

¹³⁷ *Hommage à la mémoire de Henry Simoneau, maire d'Étampes, le lundi 16 avril 1792*, (Versailles, 1792) B.N. Lb39/10534, p. 4. See also the description of 'ces tivrés ivres de sang' in P. Baillot, *Récit de la Mort de Guillaume Simonneau, maire d'Étampes, lu le 22 mars 1792, dans la Société patriotique de Dijon, par P. Baillot...*, (Dijon, 1792) B. N. Lb40/2668, p. 8.

¹³⁸ Grégoire, *Discours prononcé dans l'église cathédrale de Blois...*, p. 8.

maire que nous pleurons' to Moses leading his people to the Promised Land, while his counterpart in the Corrèze, Jean-Charles Jumel, led the mourners in Tulle with a particularly flamboyant eulogy of this 'généreux martyr de la loi'.¹³⁹ Scriptural motifs were, of course, a clerical speciality, but even lay orators seem to have viewed Simonneau's martyrdom in an equally exalted light, and Cadet de Vaux's eulogy in Beaumont-sur-Seine amounted to little short of a spontaneous beatification. Conjuring up the prospect of Simonneau sitting 'au sein de la divinité', the départemental president implored the dead mayor to cast an intercessory glance earthwards from his seat 'du haut de la voûte céleste'.¹⁴⁰

Not everyone honoured Simonneau with such pious zeal, and in the midst of so many solemn requiems and sermons, the odd dissenting voice was heard. Arras' Jacobins, for example, banned all trace of the devotional from their service on the grounds that 'nous avons cru que le mélange gothique et superstitieux des cérémonies avec un éloge purement civique devait être proscrit'.¹⁴¹ Similarly, Thibaut, the official charged with preparing for Montpellier's solemnities on April 22, asked pointedly:

Pourquoi toujours des prêtres, toujours des églises, toujours des services pour le repos de leurs âmes? ... Nous sommes plus que romains par nos institutions politiques, soyons plus que romains dans nos fêtes, dans nos cérémonies civiques. Pour temple, n'ayons que l'univers, pour autel, n'ayons que celui de la patrie.¹⁴²

Admittedly, he explained this decision by suggesting that the good patriot was so blessed that he had no need of prayers to rescue him from purgatory, but this was just sanctimonious window-dressing. Thibaut's call for an entirely new brand of civic ceremonial may have struck a principled pose, but following the local clergy's unanimous rejection of the oath the year before, it was probably making a virtue out of necessity. A mass for the repose of Simonneau's soul was almost certainly out of the question in Montpellier, and the situation in Arras was little better.¹⁴³ However, such belligerence was the exception rather than the rule, and in most cases,

¹³⁹ M. Pilat, *Discours prononcé dans l'église épiscopale et paroissiale d'Orléans, au service célébré pour M. Henri Simonneau...*, (Orléans, 1792) B.N. Lb39/10604, p. 28, and J.-C. Jumel, *Oraison funèbre de Henri Simonneau, maire d'Estampes, martyr de la loi, prononcé le 29 mars, l'an 4e de la liberté, dans l'église cathédrale de Tulle...*, (Tulle, s.d.) p. 4.

¹⁴⁰ *Discours prononcé dans l'église paroissiale de Beaumont-sur-Oise le jour du service que cette ville a fait célébrer pour le maire d'Étampes*, (Paris, 1792) B. N. Lk27/19007, p. 19.

¹⁴¹ *Courrier des 83 départements*, 7 April 1792, p. 107.

¹⁴² Cited in J. Duval-Jouve, *Montpellier pendant la Révolution*, (Montpellier, 1879-81) vol. i, p. 314.

¹⁴³ Montpellier's priests had refused the oath to a man, while in Arras, only 7% of the clergy had accepted it. Tackett, *Religion, Revolution and Regional Culture*, p. 348, and p. 120.

Simonneau was honoured with much the same ceremonial, if not exactly the same fervour, as Mirabeau had been a year before. Certainly, the crowds had diminished, (given the mayor's anonymity and the controversial circumstances of his death this was only to be expected) but the rites and the rhetoric that accompanied them remained largely unchanged since 1791. Cadet de Vaux's ecstatic description of Simonneau's place in the celestial choir may seem faintly ridiculous, but it captured the tone of provincial remembrance far more accurately than Thibaut's argumentative anticlericalism. In the spring of 1792, most Revolutionaries still looked to the Church to consecrate the memory of their dead.

The same could hardly be said a year later. A wealth of *fêtes civiques*, *processions civiques*, and *éloges civiques* marked Michel Lepeletier's death in January 1793, but precious few masses were said for the repose of his soul. Louis Michel Lepeletier de Saint-Fargeau made an unlikely hero for the fledgling Republic. Unremarkable except for his notorious unsightliness and with an inauspiciously aristocratic ancestry, he had always cut an odd figure on the Montagnard benches of the Convention. And yet, neither his formidable lack of charisma nor his *ci-devant* status proved any obstacle to martyrdom in the name of a Republic that desperately needed to justify the death of the king. Lepeletier's murder furnished that justification. In life, the *parlementaire* turned regicide had been something of an anomaly, but in death, he became a potent metaphor for a Republic poised precariously 'sous le couteau'.¹⁴⁴ Juxtaposing the majestic *glaive de la loi* that had struck down the tyrant with the brutal 'fer parricide' that had so callously slain Lepeletier, the Montagnards seized on their colleague's death as evidence that royalism had not perished on the scaffold, but continued to menace the new régime.¹⁴⁵ In the wake of the king's execution, Lepeletier's murder called for vigilance and demanded revenge, but it was also a

¹⁴⁴ Upon hearing of Lepeletier's death, Jeanbon Saint-André warned the Convention: 'On veut que tout ce qu'il y a de bons citoyens périsse sous le couteau. Depuis quatre mois on ne cesse de nous appeler des assassins, des hommes qui veulent se nourrir d'un pain pétri de sang, et c'est nous qu'on menace, et c'est nous qu'on égorge, car moi, j'ai été menacé...' A. P. vol. 57, p. 517. This image was immediately adopted by David as the central motif of his *Le Peletier de Saint-Fargeau sur son lit de mort*.

¹⁴⁵ M.-J. Chénier, *Rapport fait à la Convention Nationale au nom des Comités d'Instruction publique par Marie-Joseph Chénier, sur les honneurs à rendre à la mémoire de Michel Lepeletier*, (Paris, 1793), p. 2. The murder prompted several deputies to claim that they had received similar death threats, and led Barère to demand a wave of arrests to ensure the Convention's safety. A. P. vol. 57, pp. 516-521.

riposte to those, like Kersaint, who had dared label the Montagnards 'hommes de sang'.¹⁴⁶ The Girondin taunts of 'anarchiste', 'septembriseur,' and 'parricide' that had haunted the men of the left for the last four months had finally been expunged with the blood of one of their own. No longer guilty of atrocity, the Montagne had become its victim, and it gloried in the absolution that Lepeletier's agony conferred.

Proposed by Barère, seconded by Robespierre and endorsed by Danton, Lepeletier's pantheonisation was a very Montagnard apotheosis, but the day after the deputies decided to honour their colleague, Chénier's report on the ceremony sought to offset this distinctly partisan inception with a call for reconciliation.¹⁴⁷ After the bitterness of the preceding months, unity and indivisibility were the new watchwords of the Montagne, and Chénier's speech made all the appropriate gestures to these new pieties. Calling upon the entire Convention to attend, he urged the deputies to bury their differences along with their colleague before calling upon another impeccably accredited man of the left, David, to arrange a funeral worthy of Lepeletier's sacrifice.¹⁴⁸ Even by the standards of 1793, it was a gruesome affair. For three days and nights, the corpse, 'nud, livide, et sanglant' lay exposed on a bier on the Place Vendôme, the hideous gash in its chest clearly visible upon the plinth that had so recently borne the statue of Louis XIV.¹⁴⁹ (See Figure 7) Fascinating and repulsive at one and the same time; the gaping wound, a suppurating symbol of violated Republican righteousness, and the assassin's sword, its sinister antithesis, made for a shocking spectacle.¹⁵⁰ With the body exposed on an antique couch wreathed in classical garlands, David's macabre *mise en scène* was certainly neoclassical in inspiration, but it bore little resemblance to Quatremère's more sedate brand of classicism. *Pace* Ozouf, the two did not draw on 'un fond d'idées et d'images absolument commun', any more than they were incapable of imagining 'rien d'autre que le déploiement de la symbolique néoclassique au service du mythe de l'unanimité'.¹⁵¹ While Quatremère looked at antiquity through Winckelmann's

¹⁴⁶ Resigning from the Convention on the 20th of January, Kersaint protested that he could no longer 'supporter la honte de m'asseoir dans son enceinte avec les hommes de sang.' A. P. vol. 57, p. 428.

¹⁴⁷ For Barère, Robespierre and Danton's speeches, see A. P. vol. 57, p. 521.

¹⁴⁸ Chénier, *Rapport fait à la Convention Nationale*..., p. 2.

¹⁴⁹ For an illustration of the scene, see the *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 185, 26 January 1793, p. 225.

¹⁵⁰ Mercier later recalled the nightmares this scene induced, while Guittard de Floriban remembered feeling both moved and sickened by the sight. Mercier, *Le Nouveau Paris*, p. 138 and Guittard de Floriban, *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris*, p. 220.

¹⁵¹ Ozouf, *La Fête Révolutionnaire*, p. 129.

While an oath to overcome 'nos passions particulières' concluded the ceremony on the Place Vendôme, speech after belligerent speech belied Chénier's boast that the funeral was above faction.¹⁵³ On the contrary, Lepeletier's heroic integrity only served to shame the duplicity of the Girondins who had sought to spare the king, just as the grandeur of the occasion mocked the unmarked grave into which the royal carcass had been flung three days before. On the eve of the funeral, Robespierre set the tone with a speech contrasting Lepeletier's principled vote on the king's fate with the 'coalition hypocrite et toute puissante' still lurking in the Convention, a line echoed by Hébert's attack on 'la bande brissotine' who had supposedly celebrated the death of the 'brave Lepeletier.'¹⁵⁴ Characteristically, Barère's funeral address was less forthright, but ever the weathervane, his acclaim for Lepeletier's conscientious stand on the king's death was an unspoken, but clearly understood, reproach to the appellants' scheming equivocation.¹⁵⁵ After the eulogies ended, a 'marche funèbre et triomphale' escorted the bier in silence through the streets to the Panthéon.¹⁵⁶ En route, a politically pregnant stop at the Jacobin club in the rue St. Honoré set the seal on the deputy's credentials as a Montagnard, even if, as one onlooker unkindly noted, Lepeletier had never once set foot in the club.¹⁵⁷ With the martyr's bloodstained shirt before their eyes, and the banner of the Jacobin club fluttering over their heads, antiquity now served the men of the Montagne.

David's direction of the festival, and the rhetoric that went with it, looked to the ancients for inspiration, and provincial Jacobinism unerringly followed his lead. Invited by Robespierre to pay homage to the 'premier martyr de la République', the clubs anxiously affirmed their loyalty to the new order over the corpse of this new Brutus.¹⁵⁸ However, while the signals from the Convention and the command from the Incorruptible were too insistent to ignore, the response from the provinces proved

¹⁵³ *Procès-Verbal ordonné par la Convention Nationale des faits relatifs aux funérailles de Michel Lepeletier*, A. N. AD/1/107/4, p. 5.

¹⁵⁴ Aulard, *Jacobins*, vol. iii, p. 6 and *Le Père Duchesne*, vol. vii, p. 214.

¹⁵⁵ *Discours de B. Barère*, p. 5. As president of the Convention, Vergniaud was virtually obliged to speak at the funeral, but his terse address did little to offset the partisan overtones of the ceremony as a whole. *Discours du président Vergniaud* in *ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁵⁶ For details of the march, see the *Procès-Verbal ordonné par la Convention Nationale*, p. 2.

¹⁵⁷ *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 185, *op cit.* This was not entirely fair. Lepeletier had served as president of the club the previous November, but even the most cursory glance at the club's debates reveals that he had made little or no impact in the society prior to this.

¹⁵⁸ 'Adresse de la société des Amis de la Liberté et de l'Égalité, séante aux Jacobins à Paris, aux sociétés affiliées, présentée par Robespierre, le 23 janvier 1793'. Aulard, *Jacobins*, vol. iii, p. 6.

disappointingly patchy. Provincial factionalism had not yet reached the heights it would later that spring, but even so, Lepeletier's memory still proved divisive. While a few clubs with discernibly Girondin sympathies such as Rouen, Amiens, and Chartres paid their respects to the fallen regicide, most thought better of it, and left his memory to their more radical colleagues in the likes of Arras, Condom, or Auxerre. Once again, calls for unity rang out over the grave of the martyr, but once again, it was unity on the Montagne's terms.¹⁵⁹ And yet, for all the processions and eulogies, there was little evidence of the spontaneity that had marked the death of the Tribune nearly two years earlier. Lepeletier possessed neither the celebrity nor the charisma that had made Mirabeau legendary, and for that reason, the speeches in his honour were perfunctory affairs. Confronted by his unpromising anonymity, provincial eulogists leant heavily on the stock of platitudes that gradually filtered down from Paris in press reports of the funeral. A few referred to his unselfish renunciation of the privileged caste into which he had been born, some were even familiar with his humanitarian endeavours, but in the main, little was said of Lepeletier, for little was really known. By contrast, much was made of his endlessly repeated last words: 'Je suis satisfait de verser mon sang pour la patrie: j'espère qu'il servira à consolider la liberté et l'égalité et à reconnaître ses ennemis.'¹⁶⁰ In a political culture that had inherited the Church's faith in the sincerity of the dying man's last words, such heroic sentiments (with minor variations) were potent testimony to Lepeletier's selfless stoicism.¹⁶¹ Apocryphal they might have been, and some witnesses claimed that the reality was the rather less thrilling 'j'ai froid', but their apocalyptic tone furnished a thrilling finale to many a lacklustre speech.¹⁶² However, once these cursory tributes had been paid, and the vows to avenge his death sworn, most orators quickly returned to the conventional concerns of political polemic, celebrating the Republic and castigating the monarchy with all the zeal of the newly converted.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹ Monestier's elegy in St. Germain-en-Laye was little more than a diatribe against the Brissotins.

Duval, *Souvenirs de la Terreur*, vol. iii, p. 102. For a less explicit, but no less partisan eulogy, see Auxerre's 'Lettre des citoyens composant la société des Amis de la République.' A. P. vol. 58, p. 94.

¹⁶⁰ See for example, the 'Oraison funèbre de Michel Lepeletier prononcée par le c. Ducret, membre de la société des Amis de la liberté et de l'égalité de Chambéry.' A. P. vol. 59, pp. 99-101, p. 101.

¹⁶¹ Unsurprisingly, Robespierre's version stressed the latter element: 'que ma mort soit utile à la patrie, qu'elle serve à faire connaître les vrais et les faux amis de la liberté.' Aulard, *Jacobins*, vol. iii, p. 6.

¹⁶² Duval, who claimed to be in the Palais-Royal at the time, made this churlish claim in his *Souvenirs de la Terreur*, vol. i, p. 294.

¹⁶³ See, for example, the call for vengeance against 'les Rois mangeurs d'hommes' in *Discours prononcé par A.-J.-B. Maurin à l'occasion de la fête funèbre célébrée à Valenciennes le 3 mars 1793*, B. N. Lb41/2810, p. 5, or the Jacobins of Chinon's promise to avenge Lepeletier in A. P. vol. 58, p. 30.

The eulogies struck a familiar note, but the setting in which they took place did not. In proposing the pantheonisation of Lepeletier, Chénier had promised that 'la superstition s'abaisse devant la religion de la liberté', and the clubs and municipalities took him at his word.¹⁶⁴ Commemorating on command and with David as their guide, they followed the metropolitan model with unswerving constancy, organising their own mock-Roman triumphs along the lines of the festival reported in the Parisian press.¹⁶⁵ As processions of dignitaries carried busts and banners to the tree of liberty or the *autel de la patrie*, the parish church finally lost its ascendancy in the provinces' rites of mourning. New itineraries mapped out the new, exclusive loci of Revolutionary commemoration, the town hall and club *salle des séances*, and with these new destinations came a whole new décor of remembrance. Goddesses of Liberty made their first tentative appearances in the nation's rites of memory, replacing the crosses and catafalques that had so recently been the norm.¹⁶⁶ If few municipalities were quite as innovative as Annency in this respect, Phrygian bonnets, Roman *objets d'art* and assorted paraphernalia *à l'antique* were *de rigueur*, just as they had been in Paris. Sometimes, the rupture with the past was less apparent than it seemed, but it was a rupture nonetheless. Rouen's *clubistes*, for example, returned to a church to celebrate Lepeletier's sacrifice with incense and patriotic hymns, but it was the deconsecrated chapel of the Oratoire rather than the cathedral of Notre-Dame, and its altar bore the Roman fasces rather than the Catholic crucifix.¹⁶⁷ Naturally, there were the odd exceptions. The Jacobins of sleepy Loudéac held a mass 'pour le repos de l'âme' of Lepeletier, while the rather less somnolent Antipolitiques of Aix followed up their celebration of Louis' execution with a requiem for the murdered deputy on February 3rd, but few others followed their lead.¹⁶⁸ Bypassed by the parade, the church had finally been banished from Revolutionary space.

The topography of remembrance had changed beyond recognition. So too, had the men involved. In a few out of the way places such as Montendre in the Charente,

¹⁶⁴ Chénier, *Rapport fait à la Convention Nationale*, p. 2.

¹⁶⁵ In Lyon, the municipality copied David's funeral down to the last detail, even installing a temporary monument to Lepeletier on top of the pedestal vacated by the toppled statue of Louis XIV. *Journal de Lyon ou Moniteur du Département de Rhône et Loire*, no. 27, 5 February 1793, p. 110.

¹⁶⁶ Among the first to adopt this innovation were the Jacobins of Annency, where a statue of the Goddess of Liberty stood over a catafalque raised in honour of Lepeletier. *A. P.* vol. 58, p. 698.

¹⁶⁷ Chardon, ed., *Cahier des Procès-verbaux des séances de la Société Populaire à Rouen*, p. 109.

local patriots acknowledged the secular rites in Paris, but preferred to follow 'bien plutôt l'impulsion de nos âmes' with a funeral mass for Lepeletier, but such obstinate individualism was increasingly rare in the spring of 1793.¹⁶⁹ In the backwaters of Aquitaine, the *curé* was probably one of the few inhabitants capable of speaking coherently in public, but in towns where rhetorical talent was more plentiful, the clergy surfaced rarely in these rites, and then only by virtue of their standing in the local administration or Jacobin club. In Amiens, for example, citizen Brandicourt, episcopal vicar of the Somme, urged his audience to avenge the sacrilegious death of Lepeletier in the name of 'la liberté publique assassiné dans lui'.¹⁷⁰ It was a more than usually stirring speech, but Brandicourt spoke as a Jacobin rather than as a priest, and his harangue was delivered from the *autel de la patrie* rather than the pulpit. Few other clerics were asked, or could bring themselves, to acclaim the murdered regicide. Here and there, they attended the official ceremonies, but only as local notables alongside the judges and officials who routinely showed up at such events. In the Puy-de-Dôme, three clergymen attended Thiers' explicitly secular *pompe funèbre*, but they served no particular purpose there, and the ritual and rhetorical honours were left to a parade of prominent laymen.¹⁷¹ Elsewhere, Constitutional clerics were conspicuous by their absence from the meticulously detailed records of processions and participants that were dispatched to the Convention as a token of a town's unswerving fidelity to the new Republic. Occasionally an onlooker, but more often an absence, the priest had all but vanished from the Revolution's rites of memory.

Revolutionary remembrance had finally and irrevocably shaken off the mantle of the Church. Officially, Catholicism had ceased to play any formal rôle in the commemorative life of the capital well before Chénier announced its demise on 22 January 1793, but in practice, the situation had always been more fluid. When it came to the memory of their own dead, vast swathes of the Parisian population still clung to

¹⁶⁸ A. P. vol. lix, p. 259 and Vovelle, *Les Métamorphoses de la Fête en Provence*, p. 118.

¹⁶⁹ 'Adresse des citoyens du canton de Montendre, département de la Charente', A. P. vol. lx, pp. 71-3.

¹⁷⁰ *Procès-verbal des Honneurs funèbres civiques rendus à la mémoire de Lepeletier St. Fargeau, par la commune d'Amiens, le dimanche 17 février 1793*, (Amiens, s.d.) B. H.V. P. 12.658, p. 9.

¹⁷¹ 'Procès-verbal du pompe funèbre en honneur de Michel Lepeletier', A. P. vol. lix, pp. 695-6.

Elsewhere in the département, Clermont's town council held its commemoration in the city cathedral, but it was an entirely civic ceremony and the locale was chosen for purely acoustic reasons. Y.-G. Paillard, 'Fanatiques et Patriotes dans le Puy-de-Dôme', A. h. R. f, vol. 1, (1978) pp. 372-404, p. 375.

the old ways,¹⁷² organising their own requiem masses for the dead of August 10th as if to offset the emotional bankruptcy of the Commune's nocturnal ceremony on the Cour du Carrousel.¹⁷³ Communities in mourning still looked to their priests to consecrate the memory of their dead, but as far as the authorities were concerned, commemoration had become a secular matter, and Lepeletier's funeral was simply the last in an increasingly long line of civic ceremonies to proceed without benefit of clergy. However, in the provinces, this rupture with the rites of the past happened much more suddenly. Despite the unequivocal implications of Quatremère's well-publicised *Rapport*, despite the disappearance of the clergy from the capital's civic ceremonies following Voltaire's pantheonisation, provincial France had remained largely untouched by the steady secularisation of metropolitan memory from mid-1791 onwards.¹⁷⁴ A handful of the more militant clubs, Montpellier and Arras for example, had dispensed with the services of the clergy when commemorating Simonneau, but theirs was an antipathy born out of particular local difficulties, and elsewhere, the requiems rang out in 1792 much as they had a year before. Certainly, many local authorities had already discarded the benedictions and thanksgivings that had marked earlier festivities, but until 1793, death and remembrance had remained a different matter. Unlike the everyday pomp that accompanied elections and anniversaries, the commemoration of the dead evoked a range of meanings that transcended the normal routine of civic display, and imposed obligations that could not be contained within the confines of a political pageant. When this was true of an unknown like Simonneau, it was even more so when death was not simply a distant political event, but had a personal resonance within the community. When the dead of August 10th were 'les époux' or 'un fils' as they were for the *citoyennes* of Sainte-Geneviève and the parishioners of Saint-Séverin, or 'nos frères et amis' as they were

¹⁷² The *citoyennes* of the section du Panthéon held a requiem for the dead of August 10th on the 23rd. Funeral masses were also held in the churches of Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois on the 17th, Saint-Séverin on the 21st and Saint-Laurent in early September. *Discours prononcé dans l'église de Sainte Geneviève au service que les citoyennes de la section du Panthéon Français ont fait célébrer le 23 août 1792*, B. N. Lb40 481, p. 12, *Discours prononcé à Paris le 21 août 1792 dans le temple catholique de Saint-Séverin, jour du service funèbre des victimes de 10 août, par M. Dubroca, citoyen et prêtre*, (Paris, 1792) B. N. 4-2 Le Senne-1456, and Section de la rue Poissonnière, *Extrait des registres de l'assemblée générale permanente du 5 septembre 1792*, (Paris, s. d.) B. N. Lb40/2117.

¹⁷³ Even the organiser of the Commune's ceremony on the 26th, Sergeant-Marceau, admitted that the 'the public did not appreciate this fête.' Sergeant-Marceau, *Reminiscences of a Regicide*, p. 213.

¹⁷⁴ The Parisian authorities distributed 1,500 copies of Quatremère's *Rapport* and it was warmly received in the press. A. N. F13/1935, dossier 10, no. 1, and A. M. no. 220, 8 August 1791, p. 331.

for the *sans-culottes* of Lille and Rouen, their sacrifice called for honours, but it also demanded mourning, and mourning was best done in church.¹⁷⁵

Widows, orphans and grief-stricken friends had a personal interest in remembering the dead that politicians and bureaucrats could never fully comprehend. In the town hall or Jacobin club, commemoration was, more often than not, a ceremonial means to a partisan end. It served a public, declamatory purpose that sought to make political capital out of death and assassination, while often overlooking the suffering of the victim or the sorrow of the bereaved.¹⁷⁶ And yet, if the propagandist demands of the public sphere and the emotional needs of the private did not always correspond in the Revolution's rites of memory, they had, at least, reached some kind of equilibrium in the procession from Jacobin club to parish church. As the Revolution progressed, the tensions between these two realms had become increasingly apparent; but as long as the political class kept faith with the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, then these tensions could be subsumed in a shared ritual and rhetorical response to the remembrance of the dead. In early 1792, this had remained broadly possible as Revolutionaries at all levels of the political hierarchy maintained, publicly at least, their determination to uphold Fauchet's much vaunted '*accord de la religion et de la liberté*'.¹⁷⁷ However, as the year progressed, the threat to this accord grew steadily more acute. At the highest level, most deputies in the Legislative remained committed to the religious settlement in principle, but they lacked their predecessors' passionate personal investment in the Civil Constitution, and the frustrating experience of dealing with its riotous repercussions across the country did little to win their sympathy. On the contrary, as the pace and vigour of anti-refractory legislation intensified in the spring of 1792, many deputies, and especially the pace-setters of the left, came to view all priests with much the same scepticism as they viewed the non-

¹⁷⁵ *Discours prononcé dans l'église de Sainte Geneviève au service que les citoyennes de la section du Panthéon Français ont fait célébrer le 23 août 1792*, p. 12, and Dubroca, *Discours prononcé à Paris le 21 août 1792 dans le temple catholique de Saint-Séverin...* On August 20, Lille's *sans-culottes* attended a requiem in the church of Saint-Étienne in memory of the dead of August 10th, and three days later, Rouen's Saint-Eloi played host to another *service funèbre*. 'Un obit solennel pour les sans-culottes de Lille, A. h. R. f. no. 157, (1959) p. 272, and Chardin, ed. *Procès Verbaux des séances de la Société Populaire à Rouen*, p. 82.

¹⁷⁶ As the inscriptions on the pyramid raised by the Commune to commemorate the dead of August 10th callously insisted: 'Mères, calmez vos douleurs... Épouses, séchez vos Larmes... Point de larmes pusillanimes.' Pithou de Loinville, *Description générale et Historique des objets qui ont servi à la Pompe funèbre, célébrée le 26 août aux Tuileries...*, (Paris, 1792) B. N. Lb39/ 10862, pp. 2-3.

¹⁷⁷ Fauchet, *Sermon sur l'accord de la Religion et de la Liberté*, (Paris, 1791) B. N. Lb39/4591.

jurors. As Aston suggests, 'the Legislative Assembly was drifting towards a conspicuously laissez-faire approach' to the Constitutional church during the summer.¹⁷⁸

Indifference verging on antipathy was increasingly the norm, but after 10 August, this mounting sense of detachment rapidly gave way to a policy of active disengagement. With the insurrectionary Commune dragging the none too reluctant rump of the Legislative in its wake, the Church was progressively stripped of its rôle in civil society in the days and weeks that followed the fall of the monarchy. In quick succession, the confraternities, teaching congregations and nursing orders were disbanded, vergers, sacristans and bell ringers were struck off the city payroll, and, most dramatic of all, the *état civil* was laicised. As it proceeded, the Commune's campaign grew more ambitious, and the attack broadened out to include the rites of the Church as well as its institutions and personnel. Religious processions were frowned upon, feast days re-named in line with Revolutionary principles, the *fête des rois* becoming, predictably enough, the *fête des sans-culottes*, and strict new regulations were introduced to rationalise the conduct of funerals, even to the extent of banning the display of mourning in churches and candles in processions.¹⁷⁹ Even Christmas did not escape the Commune's increasingly confrontational attentions, although the angry crowds that obliged their priests to celebrate midnight mass despite an official embargo would suggest that the municipality's irreligious ardour was not widely shared.¹⁸⁰

The Jacobin club remained neutral for the time being, but anticlerical rhetoric in both the Legislative and the Convention grew increasingly strident in the autumn of 1792, and the accompanying legislation grew ever more severe. On 14 August, another oath was imposed on the clergy, and a week later, the deportation of non-jurors decreed.¹⁸¹ The exodus began immediately, and as word of the September massacres spread, gathered pace. Between thirty and forty thousand priests left France that winter, and

¹⁷⁸ N. Aston, *Religion and Revolution in France, 1780-1804*, (London, 2000) p. 209.

¹⁷⁹ The fullest account of the Commune's anticlerical campaign remains Braesch, *La Commune du dix août 1792*, pp. 868-903.

¹⁸⁰ On December 2, the Commune forbade the holding of midnight mass across the city, but in most parishes, outraged worshippers obliged their priests to celebrate it anyway. *Le Patriote Français*, no. 1233, 26 December 1792, p. 730.

¹⁸¹ *A. P.* vol. 48, pp. 122 and 669.

although the new Convention stopped short of sanctioning Cambon's proposal in November to cut off all funding to the Constitutional Church, a raft of legislation endorsed and extended the Commune's approach to the country at large.¹⁸² With its chapels stripped of their silverware and its clergy forbidden to wear ecclesiastical attire, the Constitutional Church was gradually being reduced to the same pathetic state as its refractory rival. Soothing words and conciliatory gestures were occasionally offered to calm the nerves of worried believers; but the overall impression was clear. As Lafont de Savine, constitutional bishop of the Ardèche, complained: 'la Constitution civile du clergé touche à sa fin. Il est évident que... l'État va devenir tout à fait étranger aux choses de la Religion.'¹⁸³ As 1793 dawned, Grégoire's 'sainte alliance' was finally disintegrating; crushed under the heel of an antagonistic Commune, an unsympathetic Convention and an apathetic officialdom.

Very quickly, anticlericalism had become the rule in progressive circles and in the metropolitan press, and where Paris led, most provincial Jacobins followed, finally casting aside their ritual reliance on their *curés*.¹⁸⁴ Some, indeed, needed little prompting. Increasingly weary of having to prop up *intru* priests who commanded scant respect in the countryside and sparse congregations in the towns, many local authorities simply lost interest in their too troublesome clergy. Eager to disentangle themselves from the complexities of the religious question, and ever more confident in their own abilities, it was not long before they finally assumed custody of the last preserve of the priest, the commemoration of the dead. Stripped of the familiar words and rites that made death bearable for those left behind, remembrance became the exclusive domain of the politician and the bureaucrat. And while they paid lip service to the widow's sorrow and the orphan's loss, they offered them no real hope and little consolation, just Robespierre's glib assurance that their loved ones had outshone the heroes of antiquity.¹⁸⁵ As the Revolution progressively colonised every aspect of private life, this emotionally impoverished assertion was meant to comfort the

¹⁸² F. Lebrun, *Histoire des catholiques en France*, (Paris, 1981) p. 281.

¹⁸³ Cited in A. Latreille, *L'Église Catholique et la Révolution*, vol. i, p. 131.

¹⁸⁴ The *Patriote Français*' outburst concerning the 'imbéciles ou les fripons qui promènent leur bon-dieu dans la rue Montmartre, et qui font gravement bénir les soldats de corps de garde... Frères et amis, ne souffres pas plus long-temps de pareilles badauderies' is typical of the increasingly shrill tone of press reporting that winter. *Le Patriote Français*, no. 1203, 25 November 1792, p. 603.

¹⁸⁵ A. P. vol. 48, p. 128.

'épouses désolées' and the 'orphelins, qui versent des pleurs'.¹⁸⁶ Unsurprisingly, it did not. Robespierre's pompous classicism did not satisfy their need to mourn, and it certainly did not bring to a close their obligations to the dead. And so, the widows and orphans continued to seek solace elsewhere, in the belief, as Grégoire maintained that August, that a requiem would benefit both the living and the dead.¹⁸⁷ However, as a new régime emerged from the débris of the monarchy, few in the Convention shared their personal stake in remembering the dead. In the new Republic, remembrance had become a purely political act, and whatever else they might have been, Revolutionary politicians were not in the business of offering spiritual solace.

In May 1791, Quatremère had envisaged the Panthéon rising majestically above the sordid squabbles of day-to-day politics, shorn of the moral and artistic ambiguities that had bedevilled Revolutionary remembrance from 1789 onwards. Detached from the popular vision that understood politics as a morality play populated by the heroes and villains of the day and divorced from the rites of the Church, the meaning of memory would take on a crystalline purity in the crypt of the Panthéon. Quatremère's vision was politically astute and aesthetically coherent, and despite the various modifications that circumstance later imposed, it was remarkably consistent. However, his entire argument depended on the existence of some basic consensus as to the nature of the Revolution, and that consensus singularly failed to materialise in the months that followed the publication of his first *Rapport* in May 1791. The massacre on the Champ de Mars saw to that. Two years later, the Panthéon had taken charge of Simonneau's mayoral sash and Lepeletier's disfigured body. The one an anaemic emblem of the Feuillant's faltering grip on power, the other an ominously bloody martyr to the Montagnard cause; both of them proof enough, if proof were needed, that the Panthéon had become hopelessly ensnared in the political conflicts it sought so strenuously to deny. Whether it was Quatremère's own *Fête de la Loi* or David's subsequent funeral for Lepeletier, the rancorous reality of Revolutionary

¹⁸⁶ Pithou de Loinville, *Description générale...*, p. 3.

¹⁸⁷ Preaching at a mass for the dead of August 10th, Grégoire insisted that 'la cérémonie lugubre qui nous réunit... ne doit pas être un vain appareil; qu'elle soit utile aux morts, qu'elle soit utile aux vivants.' Grégoire, *Discours prononcé dans l'église Cathédrale de Blois au service célébré pour les citoyens morts à Paris le 10 août 1792*, B. N. Lb39/6131, p. 2.

commemoration constantly betrayed Desmoulin's hope that 'cette basilique réunira tous les hommes'. One might be inclined to feel some sympathy for Quatremère's thwarted ambitions were it not for his own particularly partisan manipulation of the memory of the dead. Having organised the *Fête de la Loi* with 'les intentions peu-civiques', he could hardly be surprised when others did the same.¹⁸⁸

Incapable of transcending the increasing acrimony of Revolutionary politics, the Panthéon proved equally powerless to impose its disembodied vision of commemoration upon the body politic. In March 1793, David followed the shocking, bloodstained realism of Lepeletier's funeral with a more considered meditation on Republican martyrdom, but the intervening months did little to temper his terrifying vision. His *Lepeletier sur son lit de mort* may have idealised the murdered deputy as an antique hero swathed in classical robes, but this canvas was just as intense, just as explicit, an evocation of violated Revolutionary virtue as the original funeral had been. This gruesome work was destined to hang in the Convention as a constant reminder to the deputies of their duty to the *patrie*, but David's painting was also intended to leave a lasting impression on the widest possible public. Thousands of engraved copies would carry it into every corner of the Republic, where the *Lepeletier* would inspire a national audience of fathers and sons with the lesson that 'quand on meurt pour son pays, on n'a rien à se reprocher.'¹⁸⁹ The resulting art was no less sophisticated than Quatremère's, and it was certainly no less manipulative, but it was realistic enough to recognise the public's stubborn fascination with the representation of virtue and vice in its most corporeal form. For centuries, religious hagiography, royal ceremonial, popular iconography and, perhaps most strikingly, the spectacle of the scaffold had all dictated that the body was the fundamental locus of political and moral authority in ancien régime France. Whether it was the majestic figure of the prince in procession or the tortured carcass of the convict on the gallows, the representation of the body possessed an almost primeval power to articulate concepts of sovereignty and sanctity, corruption and crime, which would otherwise have remained little more than notional ideals. Whether glorified in David's epic canvases or vilified in the scabrous cartoons of the Palais Royal, the image of the body

¹⁸⁸ *Thermomètre du Jour*, no. 157, 5 June 1792, p. 523.

¹⁸⁹ Addressing the Convention on March 29th, David insisted that the *Lepeletier* was meant to be seen and understood by the ordinary French father and his sons. Wildenstein, *Documents*, p. 50.

possessed a profound moral and political significance for painter, pornographer and public alike.

This tradition carried through undiminished into the Revolutionary decade. From the ceremonial procession of busts of Necker and Orléans on the 12th of July 1789 to the equally ritualised parade of de Launay's corpse a few days later, the representation of the body occupied a vital place in the Revolutionary imagination from the very first.¹⁹⁰ As portrait, bust or caricature, this naïve realism resonated on a more instinctive level, and reached a more diverse public than the more cerebral idealism of allegory could ever achieve. At its most visceral, the distinction between the body as symbol and the body as fact dissolved in the tumult of the Revolutionary *journée*, and the cadaver itself became a means of political expression. Whether borne aloft in triumph or torn apart in the gutter, the body of the hero or villain possessed an unparalleled immediacy as a vehicle for the representation of Revolutionary values, the assertion of party loyalties, and the exercise of political vengeance. When even the most reputable of journalists welcomed the sight of the Princess de Lamballe's dismembered corpse being paraded through the streets from La Force to the Temple as an 'avertissement saltuaire', the Panthéon's prudish idealism had little real hope of success.¹⁹¹

The spectacle of the broken body as a conduit for a political message, whether placed on a pedestal or perched on the end of a pike, was simply too powerful a medium and too entrenched a tradition to dismiss as summarily as Quatremère had sought to. Still less was it possible to divorce the Revolution's past from the 'personnages qui en furent les instruments'.¹⁹² In this respect, the dilemmas confronting the Revolution's rites of memory are symptomatic of a wider tension at the heart of Revolutionary representation. One incident in particular exemplifies this conflict between the ability of abstract ideals to foster accord and the divisive potential of individual reputation. In July 1792, La Revellière-Lépeaux was in Paris for the Federation:

¹⁹⁰ De Baecque's work is an essential starting point for any discussion of the body in Revolutionary iconography. However, his 'metaphorical' approach to corporeal imagery largely ignores the questions of how this imagery was received, in what context, and by whom. A. de Baecque, *Le Corps de l'histoire: Métaphores et politique (1770-1800)*, (Paris, 1993)

¹⁹¹ *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 165, 8 September 1792, p. 426.

¹⁹² Quatremère, *Rapport fait au directoire du département de Paris*, (an II) p. 72.

J'avais pris mon uniforme de garde nationale, et je marchai avec le bataillon du Jardin des Plantes, allant au Champ de Mars pour la cérémonie du 14 juillet. Une rixe éclata dans le bataillon où les uns criaient: Vive Lafayette! et les autres: Vive Pétion! Ce ne fut qu'avec beaucoup de peine que je parvins... à les faire crier simplement: Vive la nation et la liberté! mais ma qualité d'ex-constituant et d'étranger au département me fit écouter avec complaisance; sans cela je ne sais ce qui serait arrivé.¹⁹³

This episode is typical of the animosity that infected Parisian politics that summer, but its significance goes to the heart of why Quatremère aspired to disentangle the Panthéon from the Revolutionary cult of personality, and why this objective was doomed from the very start. La Revellière's ability to quell the Guardsmen's scuffles with a well-judged call to harmony in the name of shared but intangible values would seem to vindicate Quatremère's decision to privilege abstract ideals over the concrete representation of Revolutionary history. And yet, the very fact that this fracas broke out on a day devoted to celebrating those same values is testimony to the depth of feeling such personal loyalties could inspire. Rarefied principles such as 'liberté' and 'la nation', like Lamourette's forlorn 'fraternité éternelle', might represent ideas that could momentarily unite the warring factions, but in the longer term, their precise political significance remained elusive to the point of being meaningless until they were embodied in the finer points of an individual voting record, a particular partisan career. In a political culture where debate was dominated by its own *grands hommes*, where *Brissotins* and *Rolandins* competed with *Dantonistes* and *Hébertistes* to monopolise the language of liberty, in a press where editors elevated the minutiae of individual denunciation into an art form, abstract ideals, however convincingly invoked, were simply never enough. When all claimed to speak in the name of liberty, personality, its depiction and its defamation, was at least as important as principle.

The final element in Quatremère's formula, the secularisation of Revolutionary memory would seem to have been more successful. In the spring of 1793, provincial resistance to the metropolitan model of remembrance finally exploded in a flood of *fêtes* and *éloges civiques*. And yet, as a process, the abrupt laicisation of Revolutionary commemoration owed little to Quatremère's plans for a streamlined, secularised architecture of memory. Rather, it reflected the Revolution's rapidly

¹⁹³ L.-M. La Revellière-Lépeaux, *Mémoires*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1895) vol. i, pp. 113-114.

accelerating abandonment of its own creation, the Constitutional Church. What the Commune had started in August 1792, the rising in the Vendée and the Church's compromising association with federalism accelerated in the spring and summer of 1793. With a sectarian war raging in the west and clergymen frequently implicated in the federalist revolt, Catholicism was now considered suspect in all its forms, and few Montagnards were in any mood to distinguish between shades of complicity. Following the purge of the Girondins in June, the former Capuchin, François Chabot, advised the Jacobin club as to its next target:

Vous ne connaissez pas vos plus mortels ennemis; ce sont les prêtres constitutionnels, ce sont eux qui crient la plus dans les campagnes, aux anarchistes, aux désorganiseurs, au Dantonisme, au Robespierisme, au Jacobinisme. Ils voudraient établir leur trône sacerdotal sur les ruines de la liberté. Ne caressez plus les erreurs populaires, coupez les racines de la superstition! Dites ouvertement que les prêtres sont vos ennemis.¹⁹⁴

The violence of Chabot's counsel is not particularly surprising, he was a man given to extremes, but the fact that this tirade elicited thunderous applause from the Jacobins is a measure of how far the Constitutional Church's stock had fallen by the summer of 1793. Abandoned by the authorities and deserted by its flock, with its most vigorous advocates eventually reduced to impotence like Fauchet, apostasy like Gobel or abjuration like Lamourette, or driven, ultimately, to the scaffold that claimed all three, the Constitutional clergy had come a long way since 1791. Discredited and demoralised, the patriot priest had made the transition from paragon of Revolutionary virtue to pariah of the Republic in little more than a year.

As the Terror began, the clergy had all but disappeared from the Revolution's rites of memory. There were, of course, the odd exceptions, and a few clerical eccentrics could still be found in the summer of 1793 leading the festivities of the Republic with unflappable patriotic zeal. Jean-Baptiste Mérican, constitutional *curé* of Coffinal in the Haut-Garonne, self-styled Montagnard and an ardent admirer of Marat, is a prime example of one who managed to reconcile Religion and Revolution even as the Terror got under way.¹⁹⁵ However, for the majority of priests, the choice between these two monoliths had become increasingly stark. While the occasional *Te Deum* could still

¹⁹⁴ *Journal de la Montagne*, no. 5, 6 June 1793, pp. 37-8. This outburst is frequently misattributed. Marat is sometimes credited with it, although Aston affords Danton the honours, but contemporary press reports are quite clear as to the speaker's identity. See Latreille, *L'église et la Révolution française*, vol. i, p. 147 and Aston, *Religion and Revolution*, p. 210.

¹⁹⁵ See his address calling for Marat's pantheonisation in *A. P.* vol. 74, p. 88.

be heard to mark the *fête de la Réunion* in August 1793, by nivôse an II, such incongruous observances were rare enough to provoke more astonishment than anger on the part of visiting *représentants en mission*.¹⁹⁶ A more typical scene from the Terror is that of the *ci-devant prêtre* attempting to recover his 'virginité républicaine' with some ostentatious display of anticlerical ardour.¹⁹⁷ The sight of Pigeard, parish priest of Montgeron, burning his letters of ordination before the busts of Marat and Lepeletier 'pour orner le triomphe de ces deux martyrs de la liberté' is a case in point.¹⁹⁸ More dramatic still were the clergymen turned *conventionnels* who notoriously led the way in dechristianising the countryside. The enthusiastic iconoclasm of ex-clerics such as Ysabeau and Monestier in the south-west, Châles in the Nord, or Fouché and Laplanche in the centre is well-known, but the vast majority of defrocked priests went out of their way not to draw attention to themselves in such an extravagant fashion, and quietly faded from view. With dechristianisation in full swing and the *armées révolutionnaires* scouring the countryside for the surviving remnants of *le despotisme sacerdotal*, it was the only sensible thing to do.

When a cleric did retain a rôle in Revolutionary remembrance, it was more often than not an unobtrusive one, a matter of unassuming apostasy allied with a specific expertise unavailable elsewhere. Having made his début at a funeral festival in honour of Beaurepaire in October 1792, Voillement, episcopal-vicar of the Maine-et-Loire, continued to play a part in orchestrating Angers' civic ceremonies long after his bishop, Hugues Pelletier, had abjured the priesthood and died in penury. As *maître de musique* of the cathedral and then as director of the municipal choir, his was an indispensable, if inconspicuous, presence at the Revolutionary festival until well into the Directory, but by then, his claim to embody a link with the city's ecclesiastical past was questionable to say the very least.¹⁹⁹ As a town clerk in 1796, blessed with a secure living and the consolation of a new wife, Voillement's career is hardly typical

¹⁹⁶ For Bourg Saint-Bernard's (Haute-Garonne) anachronistic celebrations, see A. P. vol. 73, p. 72. For Blutel's surprise at finding Magny-le-Freule in the Calvados marking the re-capture of Toulon with a *Te Deum* in January 1794, see Aulard, C. S. P., vol. x, p. 173.

¹⁹⁷ This was a common enough expression in the year II. R. Cobb, *Les Armées Révolutionnaires*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1961), vol. ii, p. 651.

¹⁹⁸ *Extrait du registre des délibérations du conseil général de la commune de Montgeron, district de Corbeil*, (18 brumaire an II) A. N. C285, no. 827.

¹⁹⁹ For Voillement's rôle in conducting the choir during Angers' Revolutionary festivals, see B. Bois, *Les Fêtes Révolutionnaires à Angers de l'an II à l'an VIII*, (Angers, 1928) p. 8. For his background and subsequent career, see J. McManners, *French Ecclesiastical Society under the Ancien Régime*, pp. 276 and 294.

of the fate endured by most of his *confrères*, but his conductor's baton is emblematic of all that was left to the clergy in the Republic's rites of memory.

Chapter V

L'Apôtre et le Martyr de la Liberté

On the 2nd of brumaire *an II*, Quatremère published his third and final report on the refurbishment of the Panthéon. With the conversion nearing completion, he proudly informed the municipal authorities that 'tout ce qui pouvait rappeler les anciennes idées' had been effaced from the Panthéon.¹ It was no idle boast. From the cross on its dome to the panels in the portico, every last trace of the basilica's former vocation had been removed to make way for the resolutely secular icons of a new régime. That same day, the Commune ordered the destruction of the statues that adorned the façade of Notre-Dame, and a few weeks later, the cathedral played host to a spectacular *Fête de la Raison*.² By the end of the month, both Soufflot's 'monument à la perpétuité de la religion chrétienne' and 'la ci-devant métropole' had been thoroughly dechristianised, and the same process was soon to be repeated, albeit rather more impetuously, in churches and cathedrals throughout France.³ As the church bells fell silent and the *auto-da-fés* blazed, as the slogan 'la mort est un éternel sommeil' was inscribed at the gates of graveyards across the Republic, the transformation of Revolutionary remembrance that had begun with the triumph of Voltaire finally seemed complete.

¹ *Rapport fait au directoire du département de Paris sur les travaux entrepris, continués ou achevés au Panthéon Français, depuis le dernier compte rendu le 17 novembre 1792, et sur l'état actuel du monument, le deuxième jour du second mois de l'an II de la République Française*, (Paris, an II) p. 71.

² *Journal de la Montagne*, no. 145, 4 brumaire an II, p. 1056.

³ *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 215, 30 brumaire an II, p. 216.

In a little over two years, the architectural and ceremonial structures that had defined the commemoration of the dead for centuries had changed beyond recognition. On the face of things, remembrance had been well and truly *révolutionisé*, and yet, one aspect of the Republic's rites of memory remained largely unchanged. The day before Quatremère presented his triumphant *Rapport*, citizen Pannequin delivered a speech in memory of Marat before the *société populaire* of the section des Piques. It was the third such address to be heard in the section in the space of a month, but little really distinguishes Pannequin's *Éloge de Marat* from any of its predecessors.⁴ All the usual anathemas were heaped upon the 'furie échappée des enfers' who had ended Marat's life so callously nearly four months before, and all the usual lessons were drawn from the *ami du peuple's* extraordinary career.⁵ The constant threat of tyranny, the eternal need for vigilance and the pressing desire for revenge were hammered home with gusto, just as they had been in all the other *Éloges de Marat* that had appeared that autumn, and the lament ended with the by-now customary oath to avenge Marat's death with the blood of tyrants. Fierce in its defence of the *République une et indivisible* and implacable in its hostility to the 'hommes ambitieux' who would subvert it, Pannequin's *Éloge* is an entirely unexceptional piece of *terroriste* political rhetoric.

It is also typical of the language that had been used to honour 'l'apôtre et le martyr de la liberté' ever since his murder the previous July.⁶ From the opening assertion that Marat had 'animer le néant, recréer la nature' to the conclusion that the 'immortel ami du peuple' was none other than

le ministre envoyé de la part du Dieu de la nature, pour porter la parole de vie parmi les peuples qui marchaient dans les ombres de la mort...

Pannequin's *Éloge* was saturated with biblical allusions and messianic motifs.⁷ Admittedly, this apocalyptic account of Marat's life was leavened with a few

⁴ Pannequin, *Éloge de Marat et Le Pelletier prononcé par le citoyen Pannequin en présence de l'Assemblée populaire de la section des Piques...*, (Paris, an II) B. N. Lb40/489. For the earlier ceremonies, see the marquis, now plain *citoyen*, Sade's eulogy on September 29, in *Discours prononcé à la fête décernée par la section des Piques, aux mânes de Marat et de Lepelletier, par Sade...*, in Sade, *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. viii, (Paris, 1961) pp. 283-289, and the *Ode Funéraire prononcée par le c. Moussard au nom de la Section des Piques... le 9 octobre 1793...*, (Paris, 1793), B. L. 645. a. 40. 5.

⁵ Pannequin, *Éloge de Marat*, p. 10.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid. pp. 2, 6, and 10.

desultory references to the heroes of Republican Rome, but these passing nods to antiquity did little to disguise the overwhelmingly scriptural overtones of this *Éloge*. Even that perfunctory 'Dieu de la nature' would scarcely have been enough to assuage the deist consciences pricked by these all too obvious allusions to Genesis and the book of Isaiah, for as Deprun has shown, neither Voltaire nor the *Vicaire Savoyard* had any monopoly on this particular description of the divine.⁸ Coming just days after Chaumette's decision to raise statues of *Sommeil* in the capital's cemeteries, and on the eve of Quatremère's announcement that all trace of 'les anciennes idées' had been erased from the Republic's leading *lieu de mémoire*, these references to Marat's 'apostolat' and martyrdom, not to mention his immortality, seem peculiarly out of place, a perversely anachronistic echo of the sermons of 1789 and 1791. Perhaps so, but three thousand copies of Pannequin's *Éloge*, printed and distributed at the society's expense, would seem to suggest that this riot of religious imagery did not unduly upset the cream of the Parisian *sans-culotterie*.⁹ For all its apparent atavism, this was the language of memory in brumaire an II. Even as busts of Marat replaced crucifixes and statues of the Virgin on street corners throughout the capital, even as his *éloge* rang out in the deconsecrated churches of St. Sulpice and St. Merri, Revolutionary remembrance remained confined within, and defined by, the language of the sacred.¹⁰

Neither secularisation nor dechristianisation, nor any of the other conceptual catchphrases that historians normally resort to on these occasions can really do justice to the complex, even contradictory, encounter between old words and new circumstances contained in this *Éloge*. Even as the Republic began its final offensive

⁸ As Deprun has shown, this type of terminology had been as likely to be used by irreproachably orthodox authors as it was to appear in Voltaire or Rousseau. J. Deprun, 'À la Fête de l'Être Suprême: Les Noms Divins dans deux Discours de Robespierre', *A. h. R. f.*, no. 208, (1972) pp. 161-180.

⁹ *Extrait du procès-verbal de la Société populaire de la section des Piques...*, in Pannequin, *Éloge de Marat*, p. 11. Although the section des Piques was based around the distinctly bourgeois Place Vendôme, its *société populaire* was dominated by an extremely radical clique, and the *sociétaires* who authorised this printing, Clavière and Pierre Moussard, were among the 'grand agitateurs' and 'terroristes' rounded up by the authorities in germinal, year III. A. Soboul and R. Monnier, *Répertoire du personnel sectionnaire Parisien en l'an II*, (Paris, 1985) pp. 85-6.

¹⁰ Having decreed that the statue of the Virgin on the rue aux Ours should be replaced by a bust of Marat on the 2nd of brumaire, the Commune was then bombarded with demands from the sections that this measure be extended across the city. *Journal de la Montagne*, no. 145, 4 brumaire an II, p. 1056 and no. 162, 21 brumaire an II, p. 1010. For the *maratiste* fêtes in St. Merri and St. Sulpice, see the *Discours prononcé par le jeune citoyen Claude Lamy, âgé de 12 ans...*, (Paris, s. d.) B.N. Lb40/2101, and *Section du Luxembourg*, (Paris, s. d.) B.N. Lb40/1936.

against the Church in the winter of 1793, even among the militants who espoused that offensive so wholeheartedly, the Revolution's dead were still 'martyrs' and their memory still merited 'un saint respect.'¹¹ In a Convention or a Jacobin club where the word 'saint' had come to mean little more than a rather strait-laced dedication to the *patrie* or an even more po-faced devotion to *vertu* and where the meaning of martyrdom called to mind the *Confessions* rather than the *Lives of the Saints*, the use of these words poses few problems. For a Robespierre or a Barère, this type of language signified a heightened sense of emotion, perhaps even some form of sentimental exaltation, but it carried no real spiritual weight and precious little semantic baggage. On the streets and in the sections however, the *révolutionnaire's* relationship with language was a less fluid affair, and this is where the problem of understanding the meaning of memory during the Terror begins. By brumaire *an II*, both the Panthéon and the processions that led to it had been decisively *régénéré*, but the language of memory, the words and images that defined the commemoration of the dead, had yet to be transformed to anything like the same extent. Obviously, the Revolution had introduced new terms into the popular lexicon, the *néologismes* that Mercier later chronicled so meticulously, and many words had acquired new layers of meaning, but taken as a whole, the Revolution had not changed the words men used to describe the memory of the dead.¹² By examining these words and what they meant to the men and women who used them, this chapter will attempt to explore how far the 'anciennes idées' that Quatremère decried survived during the Terror. However, while the language of memory can provide valuable insights into what the remembrance of the Revolution's dead meant that same language can also be deceptive. The language of politics, and the remembrance of the dead was rarely more politicised than it was in *an II*, was, as Alan Forrest notes, 'something to hide behind as well as to flaunt' during the Terror.¹³ For this reason, it is essential to look beyond the words and rituals of Revolutionary remembrance to the diverse political imperatives that governed commemoration across the Republic as the Terror got under way.

¹¹ *Discours prononcé par Desfieux, président de la section Lepeletier, le jour de l'inauguration des bustes de Marat et Lepelletier à la place des Piques*, (Paris, 1793) B. L. F.313. (56) pp. 2 and 4.

¹² L.-S. Mercier, *Néologie, ou Vocabulaire de mots nouveaux, à renouveler ou pris dans des acceptions nouvelles*, (Paris, 1801)

¹³ A. Forrest, 'The local politics of repression', in Baker, ed. *The French Revolution and the creation of modern political culture*, vol. iv, *The Terror*, pp. 81-99, p. 96.

Commemoration was a constant in 1793. As the year progressed, the rising in the Vendée, the revolt of the provinces and the ubiquitous cohorts of *Pitt et Cobourg* all conspired to produce a seemingly inexhaustible supply of martyrs for the Montagne. Civil war and counter-revolution kept the eulogists and engravers busy throughout the year, and as if the Republic's existing enemies were not legion enough, the Convention even tried to resurrect the *causes célèbres* of the past in the hope that the memory of La Barre or Calas might deliver the final 'grand coup... au fanatisme'.¹⁴ 'Oubliez les vivants, honorez les morts, c'est le moyen d'établir solidement la République' was Couthon's somewhat sinister advice to the Convention as the year ended, but in reality, his colleagues had never needed any such encouragement.¹⁵ Throughout 1793, the Montagnards had distinguished themselves by their dogged determination to make the memory of the dead endorse their rule and, just as importantly, indict their adversaries. From Lepeletier, Lazowski, and Sauveur in the spring to Chaliier, Gasparin, Fabre, and Bara that winter, the eulogists in the Convention had made the best of things, but the men they honoured were, in the main, an uninspiring lot.¹⁶ They were, for the most part, nonentities, obscure *fonctionnaires* and inconsequential conventionnels with little or no reputation for the public to remember, and it is a measure of the Republic's mounting sense of desperation that it sought, however briefly, to extract some symbolic advantage from the mutilated remains of Joseph Sauveur or the patriotic 'fatigue' of Thomas Gasparin.¹⁷ For men such as these, a Revolutionary apotheosis was necessarily a fleeting affair. Perhaps, if

¹⁴ Having formally rehabilitated the chevalier La Barre, the Convention also decreed the erection of a statue to Jean Calas on the site of his execution in Toulouse. *A. M.*, no. 55, 25 brumaire an II, p. 424.

¹⁵ *A. M.* no. 92, 2 nivôse an II, p. 16.

¹⁶ Although Chaliier had died in July, he really only attracted attention in Paris in brumaire, when Collot and Fouché dispatched his severed head to the Convention so that the sight of 'ses précieux restes' might counteract the Indulgents' campaign for a relaxation of the Terror in Lyon. After this, Chaumette latched onto his memory to launch an attack on the 'Aristocrates, feuillantins, rollandins, égoïstes, modérés, égarés' who were advocating a reduction of the repression in Paris. *A. M.* no. 57, 27 brumaire an II, p. 439 and *Fête civique en l'honneur de Chaliier, martyr de la liberté... du 25 frimaire...*, (Paris, s.d.) B. L., F69*, no. 22, p. 7.

¹⁷ President of the district of La Roche-Bernard in the Moribhan, Sauveur was murdered by rebels in early April. On June 10, the Convention decreed that his name be inscribed in the Panthéon, and that his hometown be renamed in his honour. Guillaume, *C. I. P.* vol. i, pp. 478-9. On frimaire 10, the Convention decreed that Gasparin's heart should be placed in the Panthéon after it had arrived from the Vaucluse, where he had died while on mission. *A. P.* vol. 80, pp. 373.

they died in Paris, David might be on hand to devise a fitting funeral, but as a rule, these unexceptional victims of Vendéen atrocity and federalist treachery received little more than a mention in dispatches, a cursory tribute in the Convention and a handful of officious elegies.¹⁸ After a week or two, a month at the most, few would ever recall Sauveur's 'dévouement sublime' or Fabre's 'généreux dévouement', (there were no prizes for originality in 1793) but this never seemed to matter to the Montagnards who seized so eagerly upon their corpses to furnish one more rationale for the repression.¹⁹ They did not have to keep their promises to remember because they knew that the next skirmish or the next successful siege would yield yet another case of serviceable self-sacrifice, and the cycle of momentary recognition and more lasting neglect would resume once more.

It is particularly appropriate that Terror should have ended on the eve of one of these carefully choreographed commemorations, for no one had invested more political capital in the memory of the dead than Robespierre. The 9th of Thermidor put paid to the pageant planned in honour of the Republic's infant martyrs, Joseph Bara and Agricole Viala, those gloriously blank canvases whose very androgyny seemed to embody the uncertainty of a 'Révolution glacée', but they were simply the last in a long line of unknowns the Incorruptible had primed for Revolutionary immortality. From Lepeletier in January to Fabre and Bara a year later, Robespierre, ably assisted by David throughout, was always the first to extol the virtues of the Republic's illustrious dead, always the first to propose 'les honneurs presque divins' of a Revolutionary apotheosis.²⁰ Of course, it had not always been so. The discovery of the *armoire de fer* in November 1792 and the disclosure of Mirabeau's compromising correspondence with the crown had briefly prompted Robespierre to reconsider the rôle of remembrance in Revolutionary political culture. Conveniently overlooking his own part in the pantheonisation of 'ce charlatan politique' the year before, he now insisted that 'il faut désabuser le peuple de cette facilité à encenser de coupables idoles'.²¹ This only succeeded in having Mirabeau's bust removed from the Jacobin

¹⁸ For David's rôle in arranging Lazowski's funeral, *Journal des Jacobins*, no. 401, 26 April 1793, p. 1.

¹⁹ Lakanal, *Rapport et projet de décret au nom du Comité d'Instruction publique*, in Guillaume, C. I. P. vol. i, pp. 478-9. Concerning Fabre, see the *Rapport fait au nom du comité de salut public par Robespierre, le 23 nivôse, l'an 2 de la République française*, (Paris, an II) p. 2.

²⁰ A. P. vol. 83, pp. 260-1.

²¹ Aulard, *Jacobins*, vol. iv, pp. 550-1.

club, along with that of the now suspect Helvétius, but Robespierre's argument went well beyond the immediate question of the Tribune's tainted legacy to condemn the crude cult of personality that had characterised so many Revolutionary festivities.²² Naturally, these reservations never applied to the Incorruptible himself; the shrine in the Duplay's parlour is evidence enough of that, but nor do they seem to have had any bearing once the Montagne was in a position to make that same cult of personality work to its own advantage.²³ He may have spoken as a man of outraged principle in 1792, but Robespierre acted as a tactically astute politician throughout the following year, and showed no hesitation in making use of the dead when it suited his own purposes.²⁴

'Ignoré' radicals, 'intrépide' deputies, and 'des héros de treize ans': Robespierre's ragbag of Revolutionary martyrdom was an eclectic assortment.²⁵ And yet, for all their apparent diversity, there is a terrible uniformity about these virtually indistinguishable *victimes du jour*. Naturally, the details varied from one year to the next. In January 1793, Lepeletier's 'âme pure' was 'douce et courageuse', and twelve months later, Fabre's 'âme pure' burned 'du saint amour de la patrie', but the purpose of Robespierre's tributes, like the rhetoric that accompanied them, remained monotonously the same.²⁶ Whether they were made to unmask the 'trahison' of the enemy within, or served to demonstrate the 'lâche barbarie des satellites de la tyrannie', these unchanging accolades were nothing more than thinly disguised tirades against the latest manifestation of opposition to the Montagne.²⁷ Robespierre's elegies were elaborate denunciations, and by the same token, his heroes were little more than abstractions. Like his anaemic Supreme Being, these were faceless, lifeless

²² Ostensibly, Helvétius fell from favour because of his alleged hostility towards Jacques-Jacques, although his links with Condorcet may have been more significant. Ibid. Already that spring, Robespierre had argued that civic ceremonial should discourage this tendency towards hero-worship in favour of fostering values that transcended the hurly-burly of everyday politics, values such as 'l'amour de la patrie et de la liberté.' *Le Défenseur de la Constitution*, no. 4, p. 181.

²³ For a particularly caustic description of the Duplay's gallery of portraits and busts of their renowned lodger, see La Revellière-Lépeaux, *Mémoires*, vol. i, p. 114.

²⁴ Annie Jourdan's essay on Robespierre and Revolutionary heroism seriously underestimates the extent to which opportunism dictated his attitude to remembrance. A. Jourdan, 'Robespierre and Revolutionary heroism', in C. Haydon and W. Doyle, eds. *Robespierre*, (Cambridge, 1999) pp. 54-74.

²⁵ Robespierre himself acknowledged that Lazowski was virtually unknown outside his own section. Aulard, *Jacobins*, vol. v, p. 153. For Fabre's intrepidity, see the *Rapport fait au nom du comité de salut public par Robespierre...*, p. 2, and for Bara, A. M. no. 100, 10 nivôse an II, p. 81.

²⁶ Aulard, *Jacobins*, vol. iii, p. 6, and *Rapport fait... par Robespierre...*, p. 2.

²⁷ Ibid.

figures, 'principles on two legs' to borrow Hampson's pithy phrase, whose lives had passed largely unnoticed by the public, but whose deaths could be exploited to serve a Republic desperately in need of victims to justify the Terror.²⁸

Plucked from obscurity and assigned a suitably stirring set of last words, Robespierre's martyrs were, to all intents and purposes, caricatures, and the public responded to their memory with all the apathy that their anonymity occasioned. Where they were known, in their hometowns and neighbourhoods, the societies and sections did not need to be reminded to lament the loss of a Lepeletier or a Lazowski, but elsewhere, in places where no one was even sure how to spell their names, the *sans-culotterie* had to be coaxed into commemoration.²⁹ Months often passed before the clubs and municipalities responded to the Convention's latest command to remember and as the year II progressed, the festivities grew more mechanical and the vows to emulate their example more stilted.³⁰ It was not so much a lack of Revolutionary enthusiasm that inspired these unthinking tributes, although the steady bureaucratisation of the Terror after frimaire did little to inspire initiative in this or any other matter, as a lack of empathy. In life, Lepeletier and Bara had meant little or nothing to the *révolutionnaires* who were asked to mourn them, and while they paid their dues to the *ci-devant* parlementaire and the boy martyr of the Vendée, they did not really identify with them, and their demise produced no spontaneous outpouring of emotion.³¹ Indeed, the one aspect of Bara's life that the *sans-culotterie* might have identified with, his spectacularly uncouth but singularly uninspiring last words: 'A toi,

²⁸ N. Hampson, *Danton*, (Oxford, 1988 ed.) p. 66.

²⁹ In Lepeletier's native Yonne, Auxerre staged three festivals in his honour in the spring of 1793 and celebrated the anniversary of his death a year later, but elsewhere, the response to his murder was, as we have seen, quite disappointing. C. Hohl, 'Les Fêtes à Auxerre durant la Révolution', *Bulletin de la société des sciences historiques et naturelles de l'Yonne*, no. 106, pp. 125-58, pp. 130-1. Similarly, only a handful of printed *éloges* appeared in honour of Lazowski, and none of these managed to spell his name correctly. *Ordre et marche de la cérémonie qui aura lieu aujourd'hui le 28 avril, au soir pour les funérailles de brave Lajowski*, (sic) (Paris, 1793) B. L. F1085, no. 18, and Destournelles, *Discours sur la mort de Lazowsky...*, (sic) (Paris, 1793) B. L. F.1085, no. 21.

³⁰ Compared to the attention Artonne's Jacobins had lavished on Mirabeau's memory in 1791, the club's preparations for its festival in honour of Bara in thermidor were cursory at best. Martin, *Les Jacobins au village*, pp. 36 and 187. That said, the new *culte décadaire* had all but institutionalised this reification of remembrance by stipulating that consecutive *décadés* be devoted to celebrating the generalised virtues of unnamed 'bienfaiteurs de l'humanité' and unspecified 'martyrs de la liberté'.

³¹ Monnier emphasises the youthful 'imagination' and 'spontanéité' that attended the cult of Bara in the spring of 1794, but it is difficult to find any evidence of this in the archives. Both discursively and iconographically, these celebrations were virtually indistinguishable from any of the Terror's other festivities, and while teenagers frequently delivered the speeches, they bear all the hallmarks of having been written by adults. R. Monnier, 'Le Culte de Bara en l'an II', *A. h. R. f.* vol. lii, (1980) pp. 321-37.

foutu brigand... les chevaux du commandant et les miens! Eh! bien! oui!' were unceremoniously ignored by Robespierre in favour of a more decorous 'Vive la République.'³² In the Republic of Virtue, where every boy was a budding *Émile*, thirteen-year-olds did not curse, no matter how heroic they were.

Jean-Paul Marat's last words were just as undistinguished as the unfortunate Bara's. 'À moi, à moi, ma chère ami, je me meurs' is not the stuff that legends are made of, but even so, nobody dared change them; nobody really needed to.³³ Unlike Lepeletier or Bara, Marat had left plenty of words to be remembered by; thousands of vitriolic pages of them in a string of newspapers and pamphlets stretching back to 1789, a veritable 'évangile' according to the *Républicaines Révolutionnaires*, and for this reason his death was different.³⁴ It was different too because, for once, Robespierre did not demand the honour of an apotheosis for a slain *conventionnel*. On the contrary, the day after Marat's murder, he had 'peu de choses à dire' about his colleague, except for the suggestion that his pantheonisation should be deferred until after the war.³⁵ In July 1793, with no end to hostilities in sight, such a postponement was tantamount to an outright proscription, but then Robespierre, like many other Montagnards, had never had much time for the embarrassingly unpredictable *ami du peuple*.³⁶ He had been an unpleasant, unreliable, possibly even unbalanced ally, the Royou of the Republican cause according to Danton who, along with many others on the left, had conspicuously failed to come to his defence during his impeachment in April.³⁷ Marat had long been something of an embarrassment and yet, he had also

³² Bara's last words were reported in a letter to the Convention from his commanding officer, General Desmarres, on the 21st of nivôse, by which time Robespierre had already decided on his own more suitable version of events. A. M. no. 112, 22 nivôse, an II, p. 177, and no. 100, 10 nivôse, pp. 81-2.

³³ Cited in J. Guilhaumou, *La Mort de Marat*, (Brussels, 1989) p. 9.

³⁴ *Journal de la Montagne*, no. 47, 18 July 1793, p. 276.

³⁵ On a more practical note, he did, however, propose that the Jacobin club should requisition Marat's presses. Aulard, *Jacobins*, vol. v, p. 303.

³⁶ Levasseur de la Sarthe later maintained that both Robespierre and Danton had 'toujours témoigné une répugnance bien marquée à l'ami du peuple', an assessment which Robespierre's behaviour on July 14th and Danton's attempts to distance himself from Marat the previous autumn would seem to bear out. Levasseur de la Sarthe, *Mémoires*, vol. i, p. 309.

³⁷ Defending himself against any links with Marat in September 1792, Danton went on to suggest that 'les souterrains dans lesquels il a renfermé ont ulcéré son âme.' A. M. no. 270, 26 September 1792, pp. 41-2. The fact that so many Montagnards either abstained or absented themselves from the vote on Marat's indictment in April 1793 tells its own story. At a time when the left could generally muster a majority in the Convention, only 93 deputies voted against the initial *acte d'accusation*, and at least four of those did so on the grounds that Marat was mad rather than malicious. See Lanthenas', Antiboul's, Jorrand's and Louchet's contributions to the *Appel nominale qui a eu lieu dans la séance permanente du 13 au 14 avril 1793...*, (Paris, 1793) A. N. AD/1/108, dossier a/1.

had his uses. By bridging the gap between the Jacobins and the streets while simultaneously forming a bulwark against the *enragés*' more radical agenda, he had played a critical rôle in levering the left into power in 1793. Marat had served a purpose, but for many Montagnards, he remained at best a necessary evil, at worst a downright liability.³⁸

Few *conventionnels* had any real sympathy for Marat, but ordinary *révolutionnaires* had always seen something of themselves in the *ami du peuple*. Scrofulous and ill-kempt, his obvious penury and notoriously plain-spoken manner inspired an empathy that Lepeletier's powdered wig and arcane interest in Spartan schooling ruled out, no matter how earnestly Robespierre lauded his example.³⁹ Marat was penniless, and this poverty was 'une vertu bien précieuse aux yeux du peuple', but perhaps more importantly, he had always tried to look at politics through the eyes of the poor.⁴⁰ While most Jacobins probably shared Robespierre's well-fed indignation that something as trivial as 'chétives marchandises' could ever inspire a Revolutionary *journée*, Marat understood the miraculous effect that 'le pillage de quelques magazines à la porte desquels on pendrait les accapareurs' could have on food supplies'.⁴¹ This ruthlessly pragmatic approach to provisioning won him few friends in the Convention, but it resonated on the streets, and appealed especially to the *citoyennes* who had to put bread on the table come what may.⁴² So too, the *révolutionnaire* recognised a reflection of his own politics in the *Ami du Peuple*'s daily diet of conspiracy and denunciation. He shared Marat's willingness to countenance bloodshed and admired his integrity, but most of all, he marvelled at his uncanny ability to uncover plots, unmask traitors, and anticipate the future course of events.⁴³ 'Trois cents prédictions justifiées par l'événement' were a convincing claim

³⁸ Baudot certainly viewed him in this light. M.-A. Baudot, *Notes historiques sur la Convention Nationale...*, (Paris, 1893) p. 150.

³⁹ On the day Marat died, Robespierre persuaded the Convention to adopt Lepeletier's plan for a Spartan-style school system as a tribute to 'la mémoire de ses vertus.' A. P. vol. 68, pp. 661-75.

⁴⁰ For Pourvoyeur's observation in nivôse an II, that Marat 'avait encore une vertu bien précieuse aux yeux du peuple, c'est qu'il n'était pas riche', see P. Caron, *Paris pendant la Terreur*, vol. ii, p. 229. For an identical opinion the following pluviôse, see *ibid.* vol. iv, p. 71.

⁴¹ Aulard, *Jacobins*, vol. v. pp. 44-5 and *Le Publiciste de la République Française*, no. 133, 25 February 1793, p. 2.

⁴² In nivôse, Parisian women were heard to complain that 'si ce martyr vivait encore, les marchands et les accapareurs n'auraient pas si beau jeu.' Caron, *Paris pendant la Terreur*, vol. i, p. 342.

⁴³ According to the police spy, Dutard, the *sans-culotterie* recognised that Marat was not always right, and suspected that he might even be 'un peu fou', but considered his 'intégrité' to be indisputable. W. A. Schmidt, *Tableaux de la Révolution Française*, 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1867-71) vol. i, p. 283.

to fame, and this almost preternatural prescience formed the bedrock of Marat's popular appeal.⁴⁴ To the classically-minded Desmoulins, he was a modern 'Cassandre', but to his public, Marat was, more prosaically, a prophet who had been persecuted for his pains.⁴⁵

Marat mattered, and because of this, his memory meant more than any of the one-dimensional representations of Revolutionary virtue that Robespierre paraded before the public with such self-serving zeal. Although Lepeletier and Chalier subsequently joined him to form a trinity of Montagnard martyrdom, there is no real comparison between the unprompted explosion of grief and anger Marat's murder provoked in July and the lukewarm laments that Robespierre had goaded the clubs into delivering the previous January or that Chaumette extracted from the sections later that winter. On the contrary, the *sans-culotterie* celebrated their *ami* with a spontaneity, a fervour and a stubborn resolve that mocked these dreary attempts to impose commemoration from above. From his assassination in July to his much-postponed and very short-lived pantheonisation over a year later, no politician was honoured, no man mourned, with such enduring devotion as the *ami du peuple*. Admittedly, Marat's pantheonisation on the last day of *an II* was a 'triste' affair, a shabby, ill-attended shadow of the rites that had preceded it, but in 1793 at least, it had all been very different.⁴⁶

Throughout that autumn, and well into the winter of the new year II, scarcely a week passed by without another section or society parading through the streets of the capital brandishing Marat's bust and demanding vengeance in his name. In brumaire alone, twenty-four such ceremonies took place in Paris and each time the attention to detail

⁴⁴ Anon. *Vie Privée de J. P. Marat, député à la Convention Nationale*, (Paris, s. d.) B. L. R. 111, no. 18, p. 5. See also the claim in one poetic tribute: 'J'ai tout prédit: serments fallacieux, bragues, trames, trahisons, carnages'. Rabelais-Daquin, *L'Apparition de Marat*, (Paris, 1793) B. L. R. 111, no. 23.

⁴⁵ For Desmoulins' classical description, see Marat, *Œuvres politiques*, vol. iii, p. 409. For a more popular perspective, see Dutard's assessment in May 1793 that 'ce pauvre cher homme, il nous a bien prédit tout ce qui nous est arrivé', and Dubois-Crancé's later recollection that 'le peuple le révérait comme un prophète.' Schmidt, *Tableaux*, vol. i, p. 283 and E. Dubois-Crancé, *Analyse de la Révolution française*, (Paris, 1885) p. 110.

⁴⁶ Jean d'Yzez, *Lettres d'un Conventionnel*, *Revue de France*, C. Vergniol, ed. (November – December 1926), p. 677. For the 'moins de monde, moins de gaieté, moins d'enthousiasme' that attended it, see the police report of the 1st of vendémiaire, *an III*, in A. N. AF II/139, no. 1089.

and the expense was the same.⁴⁷ The *sectionnaires* of the Faubourg-Montmartre, for example, spent three weeks organising a lavish procession in Marat's memory for the 21st of brumaire and raised 2,243 livres to pay for it, and their painstaking preparations were by no means exceptional.⁴⁸ An equivalent effort was put into raising monuments to Marat. Immediately after his death, the *Républicaines Révolutionnaires* began a month-long campaign to persuade the Commune to raise a cenotaph 'à la mémoire de Marat' in time for the *Fête de la Réunion* on August 10th. Unveiled a week late, their obelisk on the place du Carrousel was built to house some of the club's most treasured possessions, Marat's bust, his tin bath and inkwell.⁴⁹ (See Figure 8) The *Républicaines'* wood and plaster reliquary was the most imposing monument raised in Paris during the Terror, but it was only one of several such memorials scattered across the city. An 'espèce de reposoir' in the Luxembourg, a simple but costly tomb in the Cordeliers, and notoriously, a jewel-encrusted urn bearing his 'sacre-cœur', all testified to the same devotion.⁵⁰

Monuments to Marat were a common sight in the capital, but his memory was stamped on the city in other ways as well. An extraordinary array of *maratiste* memorabilia was hawked on the streets and sold in the shops of the former Palais-Royal, and his bust was everywhere to be seen.⁵¹ Streets, sections, even entire towns were renamed in his honour; plays were performed, poems published, and portraits

⁴⁷ They were held by, in chronological order, the section des Piques, Réunion, Bondy, Bonne Nouvelle, Unité, Lombards, Champs-Élysées, Temple, Invalides, Amis de la Patrie, Faubourg-Montmartre, Droits de l'Homme, Bonnet Rouge, Gravilliers, Lepeletier, Observatoire, Popincourt, Maison Commune, Mutius Scevola, and Arcis. The department of the *Intérieur*, the *Comptabilité Nationale*, the *Trésorerie Nationale*, and the *Théâtre des sans-culottes* also held their own festivals that month.

⁴⁸ *Rapport fait à l'Assemblée générale de la section du Montmartre des recettes de dépenses relatives à la cérémonie en mémoire de Marat et Lepeletier qui a eu lieu le 21 brumaire, an II*, B. N. ms., n. a. f., 2685, folio 122. For the equally laborious preparations in other parts of the city, see Pierre Palloy's correspondence with the sections in *Pièces originales relatives à l'inauguration des bustes de Marat...* in B. H. V. P. ms. 815, folios 111-232.

⁴⁹ The *Républicaines'* wood and plaster cenotaph was meant to be replaced by a more durable version in due course. A. M. no. 232, 20 August 1793, p. 429. For its contents, see Mercier, *Le Nouveau Paris*, p. 560, and the print, *À la Gloire immortelle de Marat...*, B. N. Estampes, Coll. de Vinck, no. 5322.

⁵⁰ For the 'reposoir' in the Luxembourg, see *Mémoires et Journal de J.-G. Wille*, vol. ii, p. 385. Over 3,000 livres were spent on constructing the tomb in the Cordeliers, A. N. M665, 16, no. 2. For the vase bearing Marat's 'sacre-cœur', *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 211, 3 August 1793, p. 61.

⁵¹ Although plaster busts were the norm, the more affluent radicals could flaunt their *sans-culottisme* with porcelain models from the Sèvres works, or enamelled watches bearing Marat's miniature. For these and other *maratiste objets d'art*, see Docteur Cabanès, *Marat Inconnu: l'homme privé, le médecin, le Savant, d'après des documents nouveaux et inédits*, (Paris, s. d.) pp. 439-50. For the sale of his bust in the renamed Palais-Égalité, see Caron, *Paris pendant la Terreur*, vol. iv, p. 49.

printed by the hundred.⁵² The death of Marat even furnished the Revolution with its only real masterpiece, but David's portrait of the dying deputy has been so exhaustively examined that it need not detain us unduly here, save to say that simply describing it as a Jacobin *Pietà*, as so many historians casually do, hardly does justice to the complexity of the canvas.⁵³ So too, the extravagant funeral, the flower-strewn altars, and the *sans-culottes'* devotion to the rusting relics of Marat's martyrdom have been described in detail elsewhere, most perceptively by Soboul and Guilhaumou, and it is not my purpose to retrace their steps here.⁵⁴ Rather, it is my intention to examine the language that accompanied these rites, the 'hyperboles outrées' and 'figures ridicules et vides de sens' that Robespierre denounced so angrily in the Jacobins, and to ask what did these words mean to the men and women who mourned Marat.⁵⁵

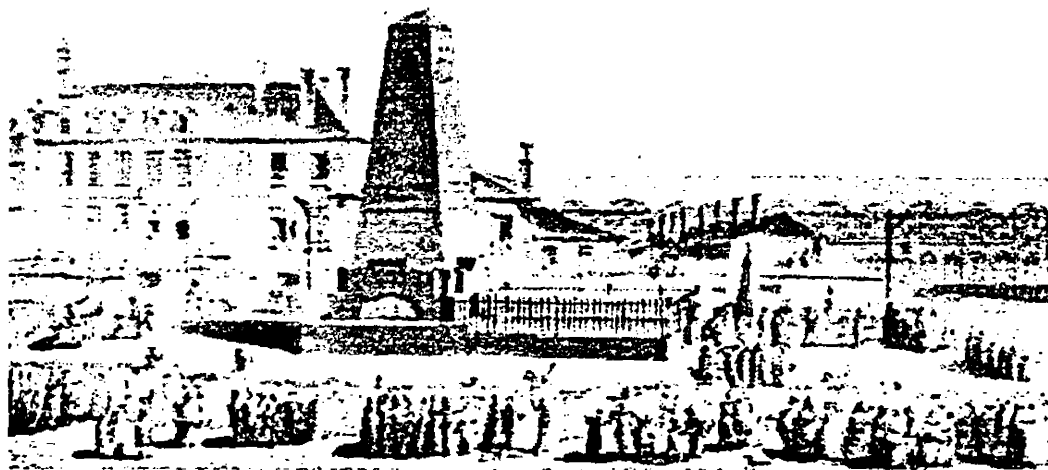


Figure 8, 'Inauguration du buste de Marat au tombeau qui a été élevé pour sa gloire... place de la Réunion à Paris, l'an 2 de la République...', B. N. Estampes, coll. de Vinck, no. 5325.

⁵² Despite its shortcomings, Figueres' survey of the communes that adopted Revolutionary names permits some comparisons to be made. While fifty-three towns changed their name to incorporate some reference to Marat, only fourteen paid Lepeletier this tribute, and Chaliér merited a mere ten. Figueres, *Les Noms Révolutionnaires des Communes de France*, (Paris, 1901)

⁵³ The studies devoted to David's *Marat* are innumerable, but the most stimulating remains T. J. Clark, 'Painting in the Year Two', *Representations*, no. 47, (1994) pp. 13-63. A typical dismissal of the work as a Jacobin *Pietà* is in J. Starobinski, *1789: The Emblems of Reason*, (Charlottesville, 1982) p. 124.

⁵⁴ The most important studies of the cult of Marat are A. Soboul, 'Sentiment Religieux et Cultes Populaires: Saintes Patriotes et Martyrs de la Liberté', *A. h. R. f.*, (1957) no. 3, pp. 192-213, F.-P. Bowman, 'La Sacré-Cœur de Marat 1793' in *Les Fêtes de la Révolution*, (Paris, 1977) pp. 155-79, J. Guilhaumou, *La Mort de Marat*, (Brussels, 1989) and J.-C. Bonnet, ed. *La Mort de Marat*, (Paris, 1986)

⁵⁵ Aulard, *Jacobins*, 14 July 1793, vol. v, p. 303.

If those men sat on the Montagnard benches of the Convention, then Marat's death was, like Lepeletier's and Lazowski's before him, quite simply 'utile à la République'.⁵⁶ For some in fact, it was little short of a blessing in disguise. Thanks to Charlotte Corday, a long-promised exposé of the 'intrigants du comité de salut public' never saw the light of day, a point the Committee and Barère in particular, had every reason to be grateful for.⁵⁷ However, while Marat's murder put a stop to the publication of this potentially explosive critique of the Committee's conduct of the war, it also offered the Montagnards an unexpected opportunity to copper-fasten their control of the Convention, and they were quick to 'tourner au profit de la liberté' this particular 'malheur public'.⁵⁸ In the first instance, Corday's Caennaise origins and reputed links with Barbaroux and Fauchet furnished the Montagne with an opportune, if rather overdue, excuse for the purge of the Girondins six weeks earlier and a compelling demonstration of the threat their 'complices' still posed.⁵⁹ Coming just days after the fall of Condé and with Norman rebels apparently closing in on Paris, this was the final proof needed to convince the uncommitted majority, the 'hommes faibles et égarés' of the *Plaine*, that strong measures were needed and needed quickly, for who knew who was next on the assassins' list. For Chabot, Couthon and Billaud-Varenne, Corday's crime revealed, in all its gruesome detail, the enormity of the crisis the Republic faced, and in so doing, helped pave the way for the Terror.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Bentabole, *A. M.* no. 198, 17 July 1793, p. 141. Augustin Robespierre used precisely the same language in a letter on July 15th, while Danton went so far as to suggest that 'sa mort fut encore plus utile que sa vie à la cause de la liberté.' *Correspondance de Maximilien et Augustin Robespierre, recueillie et publiée par Georges Michon*, (Paris, 1926) p. 174, and *A. P.* vol. lxx, p. 181.

⁵⁷ *Publiciste de la République Française*, no. 231, 2 July 1793, p. 8. Barère, 'qui a paralysé toutes les mesures de vigueur', was the chief target of Marat's attack on the *Comité* in the edition he was working on when he died. *Publiciste de la République Française*, no. 242, 14 July 1793, p. 7.

⁵⁸ *A. M.* no. 198, 17 July 1793, p. 138.

⁵⁹ Reporting on behalf of the Committee of General Security, Chabot accused Fauchet and Claude Dupperret of complicity in Marat's murder. *A. M.* no. 197, 16 July 1793, p. 128.

⁶⁰ Marat's murder was rapidly incorporated into the Montagnards' increasingly ferocious denunciations of the Girondins. On July 15th, Billaud-Varenne cited it as proof of a wider conspiracy, 'moitié royaliste et moitié fédéraliste', to butcher the Convention and overthrow the Republic, a line echoed by both Chabot and Couthon. *A. M.* no. 207, 26 July 1793, p. 226, no. 197, 16 July 1793, p. 128 and no. 198, 17 July 1793, p. 138.

In the short term therefore, Marat's murder presented the Montagnards with an unparalleled opportunity to extend their influence over the Convention. However, the commemoration of his memory also raised a number of far-reaching problems for the Montagne, problems that threatened to destabilise its hard-won and still uncertain alliance with the Parisian popular movement. The most obvious of these were the reservations most deputies, even among the left, had always felt concerning the *ami du peuple*. Privately, many Montagnards were probably glad to be rid of Marat. Too populist to be trusted, but too popular to be disowned, he had been grudgingly tolerated by his more moderate colleagues, but publicly, the realisation that they needed the *sans-culotterie* to fight their battles overcame these reservations. Alone among the Jacobins, Robespierre tried to stem the uproar Marat's murder unleashed in the sections, but few other deputies dared risk the charge of jealousy that his condemnation of the *sectionnaires*' extravagant grief inevitably incurred.⁶¹ Instead, they glumly played along with the *sans-culottes*' ritualised obsession with their *ami*, listening politely to one *Éloge de Marat* after another, and attending the sections' seemingly endless processions with what grace they could muster. In comparison to the General Maximum and the *Armée Révolutionnaire*, these gestures of symbolic solidarity were relatively painless concessions to *sans-culotte* sensibilities, but they were galling nonetheless, and few deputies took any real pleasure in these repeated exhortations to be worthy of Marat's example, or in the veiled threats that so frequently accompanied them.⁶² Occasionally, the mask slipped, revealing the exasperation that lurked beneath the Convention's façade of respectful acquiescence; but few deputies dared voice their frustration until frimaire, when the Committees finally began to rein in the popular movement.⁶³ Until then, paying homage to Marat's memory was deemed a price worth paying to keep the *sans-culotterie* on the straight and narrow. It was, as Levasseur de la Sarthe later recalled, 'une honteuse nécessité', but it was a necessity nonetheless, especially in the autumn when Hébert, Roux and Leclerc were each laying claim to be Marat's heir apparent on the left.⁶⁴ If

⁶¹ In response to Robespierre's demand that Marat's pantheonisation be postponed until the war ended, Bентаbole declared that this suggestion was primarily due to jealousy. Aulard, *Jacobins*, vol. v, p. 303.

⁶² Guirault, for example, concluded his eulogy with the advice: 'Peuple surveille tes mandataires... ne te laisse point égarer, sois en garde contre tous ceux qui te trompent.' F. E. Guirault, *Oraison funèbre de Marat l'ami du Peuple, prononcé ... le 9 août 1793*, (Paris, 1793) B. N. Ln27/13398, p. 12.

⁶³ Danton's frustration finally exploded on December 2nd, when he rebuffed another budding eulogist on the grounds that 'il est inutile d'entendre tous les jours son éloge funèbre.' A. P. vol. 80, pp. 533-4.

⁶⁴ Levasseur de la Sarthe, *Mémoires*, vol. ii, p. 295.

popular enthusiasm for Marat's memory could not be checked, it could at least be channelled in the right direction, away from the *enragés* who asked, as Marat had done, who had 'gagné à la Révolution?' or who accused the Committees, as Marat was about to when he died, of a criminal 'insouciance'.⁶⁵

From the point of the view of the Convention, commemorating Marat was, therefore, a question of containment. It involved satisfying the symbolic needs of a *sans-culotterie* still in thrall to this 'esprit prophétique, semblable à la Divinité', while simultaneously defusing the potential for radicalisation that was implicit in his memory.⁶⁶ At its most confrontational, it meant demolishing the radicals' claims to speak in his name by any means necessary, as on August 8th, when a vengeful *veuve Marat* was Robespierre's trump card in the Montagne's offensive against Roux and Leclerc. As Marat's common-law wife and the self-appointed custodian of his memory, Simone Evrard's ferocious attack on 'les lâches... qui faire parler son ombre pour outrager sa mémoire et tromper le peuple' marked the beginning of the end for the *enragés*, but the same tactic could be used to discredit any number of enemies on the left.⁶⁷ There was no tearful widow on hand to lend pathos to the crusade against the *ultras* in ventôse, but Saint-Just's declaration that 'il n'y eut qu'un Marat; ses successeurs sont des hypocrites dont rougit son ombre' was no less effective a hatchet job on the *hébertistes* for her absence.⁶⁸ For the men trying to bring the Revolution under control, Marat had assumed a vital, if paradoxical importance: he had become, for the Montagne, the *nec plus ultra* of respectable radicalism.

Confronted by *enragés* who invoked his ghost in order to accuse the Committees of usurpation, or by Cordeliers who sought to use his name to launch another 'sainte insurrection', the Montagne responded by consecrating 'le divin Marat' as a sort of 'maximum du patriotisme' beyond which 'il ne peut y avoir que délire et extravagances'.⁶⁹ It was an effective strategy in as far as it went, but colonising

⁶⁵ *Publiciste de la République française*, no. 224, 23 June 1793, p. 7, and no. 242, 14 juillet 1793, p. 7.

⁶⁶ Chauvin, *Stances irrégulières lues à la fête de l'inauguration des bustes de Marat et Lepelletier, célébrée par les employés du département de l'Intérieur*, (Paris, s. d.) B. N. Ye, Piece 4009.

⁶⁷ A. M. no. 222, 10 August 1793, p. 348.

⁶⁸ *Rapport sur les Factions de l'Étranger*, in L.-A. Saint-Just, *Œuvres Choiesies*, (Paris, 1968) p. 213.

⁶⁹ *L'Ami du Peuple par Leclerc de Lyon*, no. vii, 4 August 1793, p. 6. For the Cordeliers' 14th ventôse call for a *journée* in his name, A. M. no. 167, 17 ventôse an II, p. 629. For Desmoulin's attempt to conscript Marat to the moderate cause, see *Le Vieux Cordelier*, no. ii, 20 frimaire an II, pp. 37-8.

Marat's memory in the name of the Convention also required a more creative response to commemoration than simply demonising the radicals who sought to continue where the *Ami du Peuple* had left off. Marat had to be domesticated as well; quite explicitly according to Saint-Just, who insisted that he had been, first and foremost, 'doux dans son ménage.'⁷⁰ If this was hardly Marat's principle virtue in the eyes of the *sans-culotterie*, Saint-Just's extraordinary attempt to refashion the *ami du peuple* as a model of middle class respectability was only the most extreme example of a policy that Augustin Robespierre had outlined immediately after his murder. Surveying the pathetic circumstances of the deputy's death, he judged that the time was now ripe to 'démaratiser Marat', and this was to become the guiding principle of the Convention's attempts to control the meaning of his memory.⁷¹ Whether this took the form of re-inventing him as the sensitive savant of Fabre's *Portrait de Marat* or the reincarnation of Rousseau that emerged in Rousselin's semi-official *Feuille de Salut Public*, or most spectacularly, of transforming the putrid cadaver that had fallen apart on its bier in the Cordeliers into the beatific body of David's ethereal vision, the Montagnards sought, above all else, to remake Marat in their own image.⁷²

It was no easy task. Certainly, Marat had always posed as the Rousseau of the Revolutionary press, but however much this guise appealed to the *philosophe manqué* in a Fabre or a Rousselin, 'vitam impendere vero' was no one's idea of what *l'ami du peuple* had really stood for.⁷³ An unrelenting mistrust of politicians, particularly of those in authority, and the principle that hundreds, or hundreds of thousands, of heads must roll to safeguard the Revolution were, as most deputies were only too acutely aware, the chief lessons the *sans-culottes* had learnt from the *Ami du Peuple*. This was the main dilemma facing the Montagnards as they sought to redefine the meaning

⁷⁰ *Rapport sur la Police Générale*, in Saint-Just, *Œuvres Choiesies*, pp. 254-5.

⁷¹ Letter to Antoine Buissart, July 15, 1793, in *Correspondance de Maximilien et Augustin Robespierre*, p. 175.

⁷² Throughout this brief *Portrait*, Fabre emphasised Marat's scientific accomplishments in preference to the more extreme aspects of his political career, before concluding that 'Marat enfin, avait du génie, de l'esprit, de l'érudition, et du goût, de grandes vertus, quelques défauts, mais point de vices.' Fabre, *Portrait de Marat*, (Paris, an II) p. 23. See also the comparison with Rousseau in Rousselin's *Essai sur Marat* in the *Feuille de Salut public*, no. 22, 22 July 1793, pp. 3-4. Over 220 *livres* were spent on perfume and flowers to mask the stench of decay that engulfed the funeral in the Cordeliers. *Mémoire relatif aux frais qu'ont occasionné les funérailles de Marat*, A. N. M665/16, no. 2.

⁷³ By October 1789, Marat's identification with Rousseau was already quite explicit: 'Pour avoir tranquillement plaidé la cause de l'humanité, Rousseau a gémi dans les liens d'un décret, et ses persécuteurs en rougissent aujourd'hui. Pour s'être dévoué à la patrie, Marat gémit dans les liens d'un décret et ses persécuteurs en rougiront un jour.' *Ami du Peuple*, no. 32, 16 October 1789, p. 22.

of Marat's memory. Whereas the implications of Lepeletier's life or Bara's death could be refashioned as and when the need arose, Marat was too well known, too much the individual, to ever be so accommodating an icon for the authorities. And so, the Committees were forced, until frimaire at least, to compromise with the *sans-culotte's* celebration of Marat, while all the time trying to mask the more unsavoury aspects of the *maratiste* past. This was the real point of David's *À Marat*. In brumaire, when he finally presented the finished work to the Convention, he claimed that 'le peuple' might 'revoir les traits de son ami fidèle,' but his stark canvas and strangely disembodied corpse, like Fabre's *Portrait* and Rousselin's *Essai*, bore only a passing resemblance to the Marat of popular memory.⁷⁴ Of course, the trappings were all there. The trademark turban and medicinal bath, the makeshift writing desk and fallen quill were the immediately recognisable attributes of the author of the *Ami du Peuple*. But all trace of the demagogue who openly advocated dictatorship or the hysterical extremist who had done the Jacobin cause 'beaucoup de tort à la convention nationale' had been systematically erased from David's idealised portrait.⁷⁵ A twenty *assignat* note destined for an imaginary war-widow was all that was left of the firebrand who scorned the 'fausse humanité' that recoiled from the 'cinq à six cents têtes abattues' needed to save the Revolution, a discarded knife the only reflection of the verbal violence that had marked Marat's political career from beginning to end.⁷⁶ In painting his *Marat*, David professed to have reclaimed his reputation for posterity, but in reality, he had sought to rescue the Montagne from the memory of Marat's rhetoric.⁷⁷ Deified, but also somehow diminished, this was, as Michelet observed decades later: 'la Terreur en peinture', but 'ce n'est pas Marat.'⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Wildenstein, *Documents complémentaires au catalogue de l'œuvre de David*, p. 71.

⁷⁵ The previous December, Bourdon had warned the Jacobins that 'Marat nous fait beaucoup de tort à la convention nationale.' *Journal des débats et de la correspondance*, no. 325, 25 December 1792, p. 2.

⁷⁶ Marat, *C'en est fait de nous*, (Paris, 1790) B. N. Lb39/4987, p. 8.

⁷⁷ The portrait was painted, David insisted, to salvage Marat's reputation from the slanders that had dubbed him a 'buveur de sang'. Wildenstein, *Documents complémentaires*, p. 71. Fabre made an identical claim for his own attempt to 'peindre ce martyr de la liberté.' *Portrait de Marat*, p. 5.

⁷⁸ While admitting that the portrait was 'fort beau', he argued 'ce n'est plus qu'un Marat quelconque, mou, faible, vague..., sans respect, non plus de l'individualité.' J. Michelet, 'David, Géricault, Souvenirs du Collège de France, 1846', *Revue des deux Mondes*, vol. 138, (1896) pp. 241-63, p. 244.

In the Convention, remembrance was a matter of *realpolitik* rather than regret. However much their voices trembled when they recalled his murder, however insistently they called upon 'la mère, la veuve, l'orphelin' to bear witness to his sacrifice, most Montagnards looked on Marat's memory as an opportunity to exploit rather than an occasion to mourn.⁷⁹ On the streets and in the sections, however, commemoration was a more complex affair. While the deputies condemned Marat's murder as a 'grand crime' and the press basked in the 'désordre touchante' of a 'pittoresque' funeral, ordinary *révolutionnaires*, and especially ordinary *citoyennes*, expressed their 'désespoir' in an altogether different key.⁸⁰ From the very first, their rites were suffused with spiritual meaning: quite literally in the case of the *enragés* who summoned up Marat's ghost 'du séjour des morts' to endorse their claims to the apostolic succession, or the small-town radicals who called upon his shade to succour the Republican in his hour of need:

Ombre de Marat... veille sur cette terre encore teinte de ton sang. Protège la cause de la liberté et de l'égalité dont tu as été le martyr. Éclair ce peuple dont tu fus l'ami.⁸¹

From the *sectionnaires* who bewailed his murder as a 'sacrilège' and mourned the loss of their 'dieu-tutélaire', their 'prophète-Marat' to the *Républicaines* who vowed to raise their children according to his 'évangile', the popular celebration of Marat's memory was steeped in the language of the sacred.⁸² Admittedly, few went quite as far as the ex-priest, Oudaille, when he declared: 'Cœur sacré de Jésus, cœur sacré de Marat, vous avez les mêmes droits à nos hommages', but the abuse this analogy incurred did not deter others from repeating the comparison, albeit in less explicit

⁷⁹ According to the *Moniteur*, Jeanbon Saint-André announced Marat's murder to the Convention with 'une voix basse et émue', A. M. no. 197, 16 July 1793, p. 127. For David's call, see the A. M. no. 56, 26 brumaire, an II, p. 429.

⁸⁰ A. M. no. 197, 16 July 1793, p. 127 and *Feuille de Salut Public*, no. 19, 19 July 1793, p. 3. While he urged the *sans-culottes* to 'mettez un terme à vos regrets', Laveaux still noted the 'consternation du peuple, sa douleur..., ses larmes.' *Journal de la Montagne*, no. 47, 18 July 1793, p. 270. Many noted that women were most affected by this sense of despair. Ruault, *Gazette d'un Parisien*, p. 341, *Feuille de Salut Public*, no. 18, 18 July 1793, p. 4, and *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 209, p. 683.

⁸¹ *Le Père Duchesne*, no. 264, p. 2 and *Le Publiciste de la République française par l'ombre de Marat*, no. 243, 16 July, 1793, p. 2. 'Éloge de Marat prononcé à la tribune de la société des Amis de la Liberté et de l'Égalité de Montauban...' A. P. vol. 70, pp. 416-7.

⁸² On the theme of Marat's murder as an act of sacrilege, see *Le Père Duchesne*, no. 264, p. 2, and Lebois, *Détails de l'Assassinat commis samedi 13 juillet 1793 sur la personne de Marat...*, B.H.V.P. 12,273 no. 18, p. 1. For Legrand's reference to the *sans-culottes*' 'dieu tutélaire', see Section de la Cité, *Procès-Verbal de la Fête civique célébrée le jour de l'inauguration des bustes de Lepeletier et Marat...*, (Paris, 1793) B. L., F.R. 371 no. 26, p. 20. For Marat as a 'prophète', see the section Guillaume-Tell's 'Pétition à la Convention' in brumaire, A. M., no. 52, 22 brumaire an II, p. 413. For the *Républicaines*, see the *Journal de la Montagne*, no. 47, 18 July 1793, p. 276.

terms.⁸³ Marat's poverty and his concern for the poor, his prophetic powers and the persecution he had endured, the devotion of his acolytes and the distress of the women around him: these were all recurring themes in the commemoration of the *ami du peuple*, and as any self-respecting radical would know, neither the *philosophes* nor the Jacobins could claim exclusive rights to these particular virtues. From Oudaille's extravagant acclamation in July to Pannequin's more measured messianism in brumaire, 'tout le monde, as Fabre remarked, a voulu parler de Marat', but more importantly, everyone spoke the same language.⁸⁴

A Moses leading his people to the Promised Land, a prophet, a redeemer, and always an apostle and a martyr: the commemoration of Marat's memory was marked by an extraordinary outpouring of religious words and images.⁸⁵ One need not necessarily take Oudaille's infamous analogy as entirely typical to realise that these tributes cannot easily be contained within the secularised certainties of 'une mémoire républicaine'.⁸⁶ And yet, this is precisely what most historians have done in discussing this torrent of religious imagery. From unrepentant Marxists such as Soboul to the most urbane exponents of the new cultural history, Bonnet, Bowman and Ozouf, the verdict is effectively the same. Occasionally, a degree of 'équivoque' is reluctantly conceded, but in the main it is simply taken for granted that the celebration of Marat's memory was, in Soboul's words, 'essentiellement politique', or that the 'principe de cette émotion populaire' was, as Bonnet suggests, 'moins religieux que civique'.⁸⁷

Within Revolutionary historiography, this level of consensus is extraordinary, but it is also sorely misplaced. It supposes a strict demarcation between civic life and the sacred that was quite alien to the mass of Frenchmen and women, while simultaneously ignoring the central rôle religious beliefs and rituals had played in the

⁸³ *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 211, 3 August 1793, p. 61. Oudaille's outburst was angrily denounced by the *hébertiste* activist, Brochet, as a fanatical 'sottise' on the grounds that 'la philosophie seule doit être le guide des républicains: ils n'ont d'autre dieu que la liberté.' Ibid.

⁸⁴ Fabre, *Portrait de Marat*, p. 5.

⁸⁵ For the comparison with Moses, see Huguier, *Discours prononcé à l'inauguration des bustes de Lepelletier et de Marat... le 24 brumaire, an II*, (Paris, 1793) B. N. Lb41/3499, p. 3.

⁸⁶ Bonnet, 'Les formes de célébration', in Bonnet, ed. *La Mort de Marat*, pp. 101-27, p. 123.

⁸⁷ While Soboul concedes a certain degree of ambiguity, his conclusion is nevertheless quite explicit on this matter, 'Sentiment Religieux et Cultes Populaires', p. 193. Bonnet's argument is broadly the same in 'Les formes de célébration', p. 123, as is Bowman's in 'Le Sacré-Cœur de Marat 1793', p. 159.

Revolution's rites of memory since 1789.⁸⁸ Above all, it is rather too convenient a means of disposing of the Thermidorian charge that Marat had been 'projeté saint par la jacobinaille'.⁸⁹ Of course, it would be easy to explain this frequently repeated accusation as just another aspect of the year III's bitter repudiation of its predecessor, just as it is tempting to dismiss Duval's account of 'vieilles femmes' lighting candles and mumbling prayers before Marat's tomb as merely an afterthought to his apologia for the *jeunesse dorée*.⁹⁰ Clearly, these contemptuous accounts should be treated with caution, but Thermidor did not prompt Prudhomme to condemn the *sans-culottes*' 'faux zèle pour la mémoire de Marat' in August 1793 any more than Duval's politicised dandyism eventually drove Hébert to denounce the sections' devotions as a shameful 'bougre de marotte'.⁹¹ Royalists and reactionaries alike undoubtedly made much of the 'mommeries' afforded 'L'HOMME DIEU DES ENRAGÉS', but their aversion to all things *an II* is not enough to explain the *Père Duchesne*'s misgivings, just as Thermidor cannot account for the Parisian apprentice and staunch *sans-culotte*, André Prieur, who protested in brumaire year II that 'il aimerait mille fois subir la mort que d'assister à une fête comme celle-là'.⁹²

Bonnet's sentimental sort of 'reconnaissance national' cannot rationalise André Prieur's revulsion.⁹³ Nor can it clarify what Pannequin meant, or more importantly, what his audience understood him to mean, when he acclaimed Marat as a Revolutionary messiah. It certainly cannot exorcise the ghostly voices that so often haunted these rites,⁹⁴ nor explain why so many artists portrayed the aftermath of

⁸⁸ The ubiquity of a religious idiom in shaping the *sans-culotte* rhetoric of subsistence during these years is just one example of the assimilation of day-to-day political issues with an explicitly religious outlook in the popular mentality. On this theme, see M. Sonenscher, *Work and Wages: Natural law, politics and the eighteenth century French Trades*, (Cambridge, 1989) pp. 358-9.

⁸⁹ Anon. *Vie criminelle et politique de J.-P. Marat, se disant l'ami du peuple, adoré, porté en triomphe comme tel, et, après sa mort, projeté saint par la jacobinaille ...*, (Metz, s. d.) B.N. Lb41/1618, p. 34. Mercier also claimed that the *sans-culottes* had 'fait un Dieu de Marat.' *Le Nouveau Paris*, p. 735.

⁹⁰ Duval, *Souvenirs de la Terreur*, vol. iii, p. 364.

⁹¹ *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 211, 3 August 1793, p. 61, and *Le Père Duchesne*, no. 315, 29 November 1793, p. 5.

⁹² For these 'mommeries', (emphasis in the original) see the anon. *Comparaison Singulière de J.P. Marat avec Jésus Christ; les apôtres et les Miracles de ces Deux Personnages*, (Paris, s. d.) B.N. Lb41/747, p. 12. For André Prieur's refusal to attend the section Arcis' fête in honour of Marat, see Soboul, *Les sans-culottes Parisiens*, p. 311.

⁹³ Bonnet, 'Les formes de célébration', p. 123.

⁹⁴ François Guirault had just begun his eulogy on August 9th when it was interrupted by the sudden intrusion of a voice from beyond the grave: 'Me serais je trompé! Écoutez citoyens, j'entends la voix de Marat; il parle du fond de son souterrain, écoutez...'. Guirault, *Oraison funèbre de Marat*, p. 2. In brumaire, Pannequin's *Éloge* ended on an identical note: 'Me trompé-je, Citoyens? Du haut de la

Marat's death as a modern *Deposizione*, or adorned his portrait with the customary attributes of Catholic martyrdom, the halo and the palm.⁹⁵ (See Figure 9)



Figure 9, Brion de la Tour, *Assassinat de J. P. Marat*, B. N. Estampes, coll. de Vinck, no. 5305.

The frequency with which these themes appeared, the intensity of the images they evoked, and the outrage they so often inflamed are impossible to reconcile with the scholarly consensus that assumes, with Mona Ozouf, that 'la charge religieuse s'est perdue dans le vocabulaire de l'héroïcité révolutionnaire.'⁹⁶ For all its casual certainty, this conclusion, and it is implicit in all of these studies, actually raises far more questions than it answers about the nature of language and its place in Revolutionary ritual. Or rather, it ignores those questions in the name of a disembodied *discours révolutionnaire* and its equally ethereal counterpart, a drearily undifferentiated *opinion publique*. Content to work within the confines of a supposedly self-contained 'circuit sémiotique', such an approach to Revolutionary language seems remarkably, almost wilfully, insensitive to the social and cultural diversity of the very public it seeks to understand. The prospect that the words that

gloire où règne l'apôtre et le martyr de la Liberté, je crois l'entendre adresser aux Français ces paroles remarquables...' Pannequin, *Éloge de Marat*, p. 10.

⁹⁵ Even before David's portrait popularised this theme, many prints depicting Marat's death echoed the widely reproduced imagery of the Descent from the Cross. The compositional similarities between Marat's figure in, for example, Brion de la Tour's *Assassinat de Jean-Paul Marat* and Christ's in Caravaggio's *Deposizione* are particularly striking. B. N. Estampes, coll. de Vinck, no. 5305. For another print indebted to this theme, see the anon. *Assassinat de J. P. Marat*, B.N., coll. de Vinck, no. 5302. Similarly, a halo of stars frequently adorned Marat's portrait, as did the palm, another customary symbol of sanctity, (Revelation 7: 9). See, for example, anon. *Jean Paul Marat*, B. N. coll. de Vinck, no. 5328, and anon. *Marat à l'Immortalité*, B. N. coll. de Vinck, no. 5330.

⁹⁶ Ozouf, *La Fête Révolutionnaire*, p. 447. Similarly, McManners insists that 'the immortality of the 'martyrs of humanity' was purely secular.' McManners, *Death and the Enlightenment*, p. 357.

invariably accompanied these rites, words such as 'martyr', 'saint', 'sacrilège' and 'immortel', might mean as much or as little as their listeners wished, the possibility that this was part of their appeal, never even occurs to Ozouf, or if it does, it is dismissed with a cavalier 'il ne faut pas s'en laisser contrer par le vocabulaire'.⁹⁷

Can vocabulary really be this irrelevant? Could the meaning of these profoundly resonant words have been re-invented quite as readily as these historians assume? Few Revolutionaries ever thought so. Indeed, it is one of the ironies of the linguistic turn in French history that its practitioners rarely seem to take language as seriously as the Revolutionaries did themselves, and Revolutionary politicians took language very seriously indeed.⁹⁸ They were, as is well known, obsessed by it. And yet, for all their faith in the power of words to change the face of France, they were also suspicious of language, mindful of its capacity to mean different things to different people and wary of the potential for conflict that this entailed, and they grew more so as the Revolution progressed. Indeed, by the winter of the year II, what Robespierre had apprehensively described as the *l'empire des mots sur l'esprit des hommes* had become a cause for concern rather than celebration in the Convention.⁹⁹ In its most familiar form, this mounting sense of linguistic unease prompted the Committees' crusade against patois in early 1794. However, Barère's attack on Breton and Basque was, in fact, only one aspect of a much wider campaign to revolutionise the relationship between language and politics, a campaign born of a fear that the language of everyday life had not kept pace with the ideological needs of the Republic. In December 1793, the minister for foreign affairs, François Desforgues, expressed this fear in stark terms. Calling for a root-and-branch reform of the vernacular, he warned the Convention that Revolutionary discourse was still weighed down by the linguistic 'débris' of a morally corrupt *ancien régime*. Desforgues' concerns were, strictly speaking, a matter of administrative nomenclature, but his anxiety that a dangerously outdated political vocabulary could 'tout corrompre, de tout dénaturer' had far wider implications as

⁹⁷ Ozouf, *La Fête Révolutionnaire*, p. 447.

⁹⁸ While the politics of patois has received considerable attention, Revolutionary attitudes towards French have been largely taken for granted. Rosenfeld's recent study of the 18th century's anxiety concerning 'l'abus des mots' is a notable exception to this complacent approach. S. Rosenfeld, *A Revolution in Language: the problem of signs in late eighteenth-century France*, (Stanford, 2001)

⁹⁹ 'Discours de Maximilien Robespierre sur l'influence de la calomnie sur la Révolution, prononcé à la Société dans la séance du 28 octobre 1792', in Robespierre, *Oeuvres*, vol. ix, pp. 44-60, p. 45.

well.¹⁰⁰ Already that August, Hébert, who had a better ear for the language of the streets than most, had hinted at the relationship between moral regeneration and linguistic reform when he complained that 'la Révolution n'a pas changé les hommes',¹⁰¹ and the following June, Grégoire put the same problem even more bluntly:

Les mots sont les lettres de change de l'entendement; si donc il acquiert de nouvelles idées, il lui faut des termes nouveaux; sans quoi l'équilibre serait rompu.¹⁰²

If few deputies enjoyed the familiarity with Leibnitz that informed Grégoire's diagnosis of the nation's linguistic ills, his belief that a gap had opened up between what should be said in the Republic of Virtue and what could be said in reality was nevertheless widely shared.

Language, it was increasingly feared in *an II*, had failed to rise to the required *hauteur des circonstances* and this unease endured, even after Thermidor. By vendémiaire year III, Merlin de Thionville's call for reforms designed to 'élever la langue française à la hauteur des destinées de la France, de la rendre propre à l'usage de la liberté' was as ill-timed as it was ill-conceived, but it still reflects the extent to which language had come to be perceived as a political problem during the Terror.¹⁰³ While some *conventionnels*, like Desforgues and Merlin, consoled themselves with the illusion that the meaning of words, like the measurement of time itself, could be changed at the stroke of a politician's pen, their more astute contemporaries were less sanguine. As Talleyrand had grasped as early as 1791, 'le perfectionnement de la langue' would take 'du temps, une forte analyse, et l'appui de l'opinion public pour être complètement résolu', but in this, as in everything else, time was never on the Revolution's side.¹⁰⁴ Just as the Republican calendar failed to take root because 'l'empire de l'habitude, surtout sur les esprits peu éclairés, est tel qu'il maîtrise

¹⁰⁰ Alarmed by the odious connotations that still adhered to the word 'ministère', he insisted that 'tout, jusqu'à la langue, doit être régénéré dans le système républicain.' A. P. vol. 81, p. 638.

¹⁰¹ Calling for a strictly Republican education, Hébert claimed that popular *moeurs* would only be truly revolutionised when the first word on infants' lips was *liberté* and when men ceased to believe that a little Latin possessed the power to purify the soul. *Le Père Duchesne*, no. 277, 26 August 1793, p. 2.

¹⁰² *Rapport sur la nécessité et les moyens d'anéantir les patois...*, reprinted in F.-P. Bowman, ed. *L'abbé Grégoire, évêques des Lumières*, (Paris, 1988) pp. 127-48, p. 133. While Grégoire's main point concerned the inadequacy of regional dialects to communicate Revolutionary ideas, the broad principle could be applied just as readily to French, as Desforgues' earlier complaint made clear.

¹⁰³ *Opinion de Merlin de Thionville sur les Fêtes Nationales prononcée à la Convention Nationale, dans la séance du 9 vendémiaire an III*, (Paris, an III) B. N. Le38/978, p. 17.

¹⁰⁴ Talleyrand, *Rapport sur l'Instruction Public...*, p. 96.

l'homme' so the same 'stupide habitude' sabotaged the Montagne's attempts to revolutionise the spoken word.¹⁰⁵ Imposing *tutoiement* by force was one thing, but beyond such token gestures, customary usage, the established relationship between words and things that Mercier had long recognised as 'le maître absolu' of meaning, remained obstinately impervious to Republican regeneration throughout the Terror.¹⁰⁶ For all his esoteric interest in a *lingua universalis*, Grégoire's analysis went to the heart of the problem; the Revolution did need to develop 'des termes nouveaux' for the simple reason that too many of the old words still retained their customary connotations. In this sense, the nonchalant claim that 'la charge religieuse s'est perdue dans le vocabulaire de l'héroïcité révolutionnaire' simply cannot explain what a martyr's death meant to the men and women who mourned Marat.

'Il ne faut pas s'en laisser contrer par le vocabulaire' seems just as inappropriate a conclusion to draw if only because being taken in by language is precisely what the ordinary *révolutionnaire* invariably was. In the Convention or the Jacobin club, language was an infinitely adaptable means to an end. It was a device to be used and abused by politicians who had learnt *l'art de parler* in the *collèges* and then honed their rhetorical skills in law courts and legislatures. Words were accommodating allies for the lawyers and professionals who sat in the Assemblies, and they proved equally willing accomplices for the bourgeois politicians masquerading as *des vrais sans-culottes* who dominated Parisian politics throughout the Terror. By virtue of their education, their standing within the community, and above all, their ability to articulate and manipulate the inchoate aspirations of the ordinary *révolutionnaire*, these were exceptional men, as adept at exploiting language as they were at re-configuring their own social identities to meet the egalitarian demands of politics in the year II.¹⁰⁷ *Citoyen Sade* is perhaps an extreme example of this, but his *Discours aux mânes de Marat* is extraordinary only for the breadth of its author's imposture. While few of Marat's eulogists had undergone such a profound metamorphosis as the *ci-devant* marquis, they were still far from being the unlettered 'hommes du peuple'

¹⁰⁵ For Guyardin's complaint in March 1794, see Aulard, *C. S. P.* vol. xi, p. 685.

¹⁰⁶ Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*, vol. ii, p. 909.

¹⁰⁷ This interpretation of the social origins of the *sans-culotte* leadership owes much to Andrews' argument that the *meneurs* in the sections constituted 'a paternalist and populist oligarchy of the literate, skilled and propertied.' R. M. Andrews, 'Social Structures, Political Elites and Ideology in Revolutionary Paris, 1792-1794: a critical evaluation of Albert Soboul's *Les sans-culottes Parisiens en l'an II*', *Journal of Social History*, (1985) pp. 71-103, p. 76.

that Bonnet, following Soboul, assumes.¹⁰⁸ On the contrary, they were artists and writers like François Chatelain, Pierre Jault and Michel Dorat-Cubières, the self-appointed 'poète de la Révolution' who, as the rather more patrician sounding de Cubières-Palmézeaux, had spent the 1780's peddling an eclectic array of essays, *éloges* and erotica on the fringes of the literary *monde*. They were publishers like François Guirault, physicians like doctor Gavard, and public servants like Louis-Marie Lulier. Above all, they were professional politicians: men such as François Desfieux, president of the section Lepeletier and another of Marat's most passionate eulogists, who managed to reconcile a reputation for aggressive *hébertisme* with a career as a prosperous wine-merchant in the rue Marc. They may have tried to disguise the fact, but the *meneurs* in the sections possessed social and cultural capital, and they possessed it in abundance.

Despite their claims to be one with the common people, the men, and they were almost always men, who presided over the celebration of Marat's memory in the sections were members of a political and cultural elite. They were accomplished public speakers, educated men who peppered their *éloges* with passages from the *philosophes* and references to Brutus and Barnevelt, Scaevola and Sydney, but they were also rooted in their communities, and they knew what those communities expected of them. They knew that an enlightened epigram or an apposite allusion to antiquity might impress the *conventionnels* who were usually invited to attend these ceremonies, but they also understood that those same flourishes would mean next to nothing to the soldiers and shopkeepers, cobblers and *quarante sols* who composed the bulk of the audience at these events.¹⁰⁹ With the vocal support of the occasional seamstress and washerwoman, and women had always been among Marat's most ardent admirers, these were the militants who did not dominate debate in the sections, but who provided the votes and very often the fists that allowed others to do so, and it was to them that these eulogies were primarily addressed.¹¹⁰ For the rival factions laying claim to Marat's legacy, for the *enragés*, *hébertistes* and *dantonistes* who

¹⁰⁸ Bonnet, *Naissance du Panthéon*, p. 279.

¹⁰⁹ Huguier, a *commis* in department of the Interior, got around this problem by beginning his short elegy with a quotation from Thomas' *Essai sur les Éloges* and ending it by comparing Marat to Moses. Huguier, *Discours prononcé à l'inauguration des bustes de Lepelletier et de Marat*..., pp. 1 and 3.

¹¹⁰ According to the *Journal Français* in April 1793: 'c'étaient surtout les femmes qui lui avaient voué l'attachement le plus inviolable.' Cited in G. Walter, *Marat*, (Paris, 1960) p. 345.

latched onto his memory to endorse their claims for an acceleration or a relaxation of the Terror, even for the *robepierristes* who used remembrance only to defend an increasingly indefensible status quo, commemoration was about these rank and file *révolutionnaires*. It was about mobilising and maintaining their support, because in 1793, this was the support that made purges possible and that decided *journées*.

In this respect, it hardly matters whether *meneurs* like Chatelain or Desfieux looked to the *philosophes* or the theologians for inspiration when they insisted that Marat was 'immortel', or that his death was merely 'le premier instant d'une vie nouvelle'.¹¹¹ Cultured men and clever politicians, they could afford to indulge in the studied imprecision, the carefully crafted equivocation, of tributes that managed to evoke both *postérité* and paradise in one and the same breath. What matters is what their listeners took these words to mean, and words invariably meant what they said in the forthright world of the ordinary *révolutionnaire*. Here, they were neither metaphors nor similes, but simple signs, possessed of 'un sens littéral, une puissance maléfique' that defied ambiguity or contradiction.¹¹² Certainly, the *hommes d'état*, the 'infâmes tartuffes' that Marat had warned his readers about, used language to dissemble,¹¹³ but the *révolutionnaire* was, as Cobb so perceptively put it, too 'crédule', too willing to 'croit ce qu'on lui dit, notamment quand il s'agit des affaires publiques' to suppose that others could do the same.¹¹⁴ He was too unsuspecting to ask why Roux conjured up 'l'ombre de Marat' and too trusting to cast doubt on the nocturnal visitations that charged Hébert to 'achever, si tu peux, la tâche que j'avais entreprise'.¹¹⁵ He was too unquestioning to imagine that Desfieux's declaration that 'l'homme n'est plus, un demi-dieux renaît de sa cendre' was simply an attempt to invest an otherwise ordinary polemic with an aura of otherworldly authority.¹¹⁶ He was, above all, too stubbornly, ploddingly, almost admirably, literal-minded for François Chatelain's warning that

ces martyrs de la liberté n'ont fait en mourant que se dépouiller du matériel de leur existence, car leurs âmes sont immortelles, leurs ombres suivent encore vos travaux, elles vous

¹¹¹ *Discours prononcé par Desfieux...*, p. 2.

¹¹² R. Cobb, 'Quelques Aspects de la Mentalité Révolutionnaire, (avril 1793-Thermidor an II)', in R. Cobb, *Terreur et Subsistances: 1793-1795*, (Paris, 1965) pp. 3-53, p. 8.

¹¹³ This was a constant concern of Marat's. See, for example, his warning concerning the eloquence of the 'infâmes tartuffes' of the Gironde. Marat, *Œuvres politiques*, vol. ix, p. 5741.

¹¹⁴ Cobb, 'Quelques Aspects de la Mentalité Révolutionnaire', p. 11.

¹¹⁵ *Le Publiciste de la République Française par l'ombre de Marat*, no. 243, 16 July, 1793, p. 2 and for Marat's apparition before Hébert, *Le Père Duchesne*, no. 264, 30 July 1793, p. 2.

¹¹⁶ *Discours prononcé par Desfieux...*, p. 2.

poursuivront sans cesse, et elles ne vous laisseront tranquille que quand leurs ennemis qui sont les vôtres seront entièrement détruits...

not to have carried more than a hint of real menace.¹¹⁷ However absurd they might seem, however obstinately unenlightened they appear, these apparitions and invocations, and the threat of retribution that they so often implied, deserve to be taken seriously, if only because the *révolutionnaire* took everything seriously.

Even after four years of Revolution, four years of disgraced leaders and misplaced trust, the *révolutionnaire* remained a political innocent. He was too 'crédule' to question the motives that lay behind these spectral tales and too plainspoken to imagine that these incessant allusions to Marat's 'immortalité' might refer to more than one thing. More importantly, he had no real reason to doubt the meaning of these nebulous accolades. To a public that had resisted the best efforts of generations of reforming priests to curb 'l'imagination... la superstition, l'excessive crédulité' of the common man, Roux's 'ombre de Marat' and Hébert's dialogue with the dead *ami du peuple* were not simply rhetorical devices.¹¹⁸ On the contrary, these ghostly visions represented a very real claim to mediate between the living and the dead, a claim that could confer an unparalleled moral authority upon the speaker, but only if taken at face value. And in cities and towns where 'le menu peuple' continued to 'croient fermement aux revenants' and where rumours of hauntings still drew crowds eager to catch a glimpse of a ghost, these phantom voices were meant to be taken at face value.¹¹⁹ Whether made to endorse a call to arms or to sanctify the *status quo*, 'l'ombre de Marat', like Chatelain's chilling vision of the *ami du peuple* as an avenging angel, was invoked too insistently during these rites for its presence to be

¹¹⁷ F. Chatelain, *Ordre de la Marche qui sera observé à la fête funèbre de l'inauguration des bustes de Pelletier et Marat, dans la section des Lombards, le décadi de la première décade du mois de brumaire, an II*, (Paris, 1793) B. H. V. P., 12,273, no. 15, p. 7.

¹¹⁸ This was Calmet's despairing explanation for the popular classes' continuing belief in ghosts. A. Calmet, *Traité sur les apparitions des esprits et sur les vampires*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1751), vol. i., p. 468.

¹¹⁹ Rumours of apparitions invariably drew large crowds in 18th century Paris. Hardy, for example, recalls a 'concours populaire et nombreux' gathering in the rue de la Croix-des-Petits-Champs when word spread that a ghost had appeared in a house there in December 1769, and this impression is seconded by Pierre Bernadau's exasperated claim that the common people of Bordeaux still believed in ghosts in his response to the *enquête Grégoire* in 1790. S.-P. Hardy, *Mes Loisirs, Journal d'événements tels qu'ils parviennent à ma connaissance, 1764-73*, M. Tournoux, ed. (Paris, 1912) pp. 163-4, and Bernadau in M. de Certeau et al, *Une Politique de la Langue: la Révolution française et les patois*, (Paris, 2002 ed.) pp. 189-207, p. 204. On the persistence of popular belief in ghosts into the 19th century and beyond, see J. Devlin, *The Superstitious Mind*, (New Haven, 1987) pp. 88-92, and T. Kselman, *Death and the Afterlife in Modern France*, (Princeton, 1993) pp. 58-64.

discounted as a rhetorical affectation. In eighteenth-century Paris, it still 'made sense' to speak of ghosts and apparitions, and Marat's eulogists made the most of this fact.¹²⁰

Not everyone shared Hébert or Roux's facility for communing with the spirit world, but many of the tributes that accompanied these eulogies were just as ambiguous as their more ethereal invocations. Marat's much-vaunted 'immortalité' is a case in point. For those familiar with the *Encyclopédie*, or even with the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*, 'immortalité' was an intrinsically ambivalent term.¹²¹ It had a secular sense as well as a spiritual dimension, but for men and women who had learnt to read, if they could read at all, with catechisms that defined doctrine in the very simplest of terms, 'immortalité' meant the soul's existence after death or it meant nothing at all.¹²² For those whose personal libraries and art collections never extended much beyond a few well-thumbed devotional works and Saints' Lives or a shoddy print of a crucifixion or a intercessory saint, and these still weighed heavily in Parisian popular culture, a very uncomplicated belief in life after death was part of the fabric of everyday existence.¹²³ Less an idea than a fact of life, this exceptionally unequivocal understanding of 'immortalité' was also implicit in the masses 'pour le repos de l'âme' that had formed the ceremonial cornerstone of ordinary Parisians' attempts to remember their dead in 1789, 1791, and August 1792. For the *révolutionnaires* who organised and attended these requiems, perhaps even for the anticlerical *avant-garde* amongst them who spurned these masses on the grounds that:

¹²⁰ Stuart Clark's suggestion that the historian should eschew excessively functionalist accounts of popular culture in order 'to understand what it made sense to say and do in a traditional culture' seems particularly appropriate in this instance. S. Clark, 'French Historians and Early Modern Popular Culture', *P. & P.*, no. 100, (1983) pp. 62-99, p. 98.

¹²¹ Long before Diderot's barbed reinterpretation of 'Immortalité' in the *Encyclopédie*, the *Académie Française* had acknowledged a secular definition alongside the established religious one when, in 1694, it defined the word as: 'Une durée perpétuelle dans les siècles à venir, dans la postérité.'

¹²² The simple question and answer format of the catechism left little room for ambiguity in this respect. See, for instance, the typical query from 1792: 'Notre âme mourra-t-elle?' to which the requisite response was: 'Non, elle est immortelle.' *Catéchisme de Grenoble contenant l'abrégé de la doctrine Chrétienne pour les enfants, les prières du Matin et du soir*, (Grenoble, 1792 ed.) p. 47.

¹²³ On the predominance of devotional literature in popular book collections in the 1780's, see, for example, Roche, *The People of Paris*, p. 215 and J. Solé, 'Lecture et classes populaires à Grenoble au dix-huitième siècle: le témoignage des inventaires après décès', in *Images du peuple au 18^e siècle*, (Paris, 1973) pp. 95-102. An identical preponderance was evident in the popular art market, where religious iconography constituted the vast bulk of art works in both bourgeois and artisanal households on the eve of the Revolution. J. Chatelus, 'Thèmes picturaux dans les appartements des marchands et artisans parisiens au XVIII^e siècle', *D. H. S.*, vol. vi, (1974) pp. 309-24, and C. Fairchild, 'Marketing the Counter-Reformation: Religious objects and Consumerism in Early Modern France', in J. Censer et al, ed. *Visions and Revisions of Eighteenth-Century France*, (Pennsylvania, 1997) pp. 31- 52.

Les martyrs de la liberté, nos braves frères morts pour la patrie, le 10 août, n'ont pas besoin, Monsieur, d'être excusés ni recommandés auprès d'un Dieu juste, bon et clément... Dieu est juste, Monsieur, et par conséquent nos frères jouissent d'un bonheur parfait, que rien ne pourra troubler. Les mauvais citoyens peuvent seuls en douter',¹²⁴

there is no reason to believe that immortality was just another figure of speech.¹²⁵

By the winter of *an II*, of course, the committed *révolutionnaire* had abandoned purgatory to the 'fanatiques' and mocked the masses that were supposed to lighten its load. And yet, for all his anticlerical bravado, he still believed, like Jacques Ménétra, that 'lorsque notre existence viendra à nous manquer que notre âme ira jouir du bonheur qui l'attend.'¹²⁶ Ménétra may not be a typical *sans-culotte*, he was probably too much inclined to introspection for that, but his ability to accommodate an unbridled contempt for the clergy with an exceptionally matter-of-fact, and extremely moralistic, expectation that 'si... tu fasses le bien ton âme existera toujours' is striking nevertheless.¹²⁷ Ménétra's very literal belief in an afterlife suggests the extent to which an essentially religious, if not especially Catholic, understanding of 'immortalité' remained deeply ingrained in Parisian popular culture throughout the Terror. Despite Fouché's belligerent 'la mort est un sommeil éternel', or Chaumette's feeble 'l'homme juste ne meurt jamais, il vit dans la mémoire de ses concitoyens', death and remembrance retained a spiritual significance for the *sans-culotterie*.¹²⁸ The *ora pro nobis* that characterised the Catholic cult of the dead had certainly been discarded, but if the *sans-culotte* had abolished purgatory, he had not yet embraced the *philosophes*' posterity. Culturally speaking, the *révolutionnaire* was in limbo.

Marat's eulogists recognised this, even if some historians have proved surprisingly willing to conflate the visceral anticlericalism of the streets with the more considered irreligion of the proconsuls.¹²⁹ Admittedly, a few enthusiasts tried to disabuse their

¹²⁴ On 5 September 1792, the *sectionnaires* of the rue Poissonnière gave this as their reason for refusing to attend a requiem for the dead of August 10th in the church of Saint-Laurent. *Extrait des registres de l'assemblée générale permanente du 5 septembre 1792*, (Paris, 1792) B. N. Lb40/2117.

¹²⁵ According to Bowman, the "Marat immortel" that featured in so many of these speeches was no more than 'une figure de rhétorique bien traditionnelle.' Bowman, 'Le Sacré-Cœur de Marat', p. 163.

¹²⁶ J. Ménétra, *Journal de ma vie*, D. Roche, ed. (Paris, 1982) p. 423.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 422.

¹²⁸ On the 1st of frimaire, the Commune decreed that this slogan should accompany all funeral corteges through the city. *A. M.* no. 63, 3 frimaire an II, p. 482.

¹²⁹ Much of the literature on dechristianisation fails to differentiate between these two related, but nevertheless distinct, aspects of the problem. Soboul's suggestion that 'l'hostilité à la religion et au

audiences of such outmoded notions, explaining that the martyrs of liberty were not 'susceptible d'une nouvelle vie, c'est dans notre cœur que leur mémoire repose', but most did not.¹³⁰ Instead, they took full advantage of the premeditated ambivalence of these tributes, snatching at whatever supernatural sanction 'l'ombre de Marat' could be made to bestow upon their differing definitions of what the Terror should be. It was a cynical and manipulative strategy; an abuse of the *révolutionnaire's* trust and of his devotion to Marat's memory, but when remembrance was a matter of life and death, when commemoration had to communicate moral and political authority to the widest public possible, it was understandable too. Understandable perhaps, but for those dedicated to rooting out superstition in the name of Reason, the cult of Marat also amounted to conduct unbecoming in a Republican régime. By frimaire, the authorities had endured these unseemly invocations and incessant apparitions for long enough. In the Convention, Danton signalled the end of the deputies' patience when he declared that the continued celebration of Marat's memory was officially 'inutile', and to emphasise the point, the Commune banned the sections from holding any further ceremonies in his honour.¹³¹ The Commune's edict was not especially effective. The parades marched on, albeit more tentatively, until prairial when the Committee of Public Safety finally vetoed the section Marat's attempt to revive the fortunes of the left with one more procession in honour of its patron, but by then, *sans-culottisme* had all but ceased to exist as an autonomous political entity.¹³²

In one sense, these successive bans were part and parcel of the Montagne's steady emasculation of the popular movement, but they are also more than just cultural appendices to the law of 14 frimaire and the attack on *hébertisme* as an atheistic conspiracy. Factional considerations, and official antipathy, undoubtedly contributed

clergé constituait sans conteste l'un des traits de la mentalité populaire' is typical in this respect. Soboul, *Les sans-culottes Parisiens*, p. 283.

¹³⁰ *Discours prononcé dans l'Assemblée Générale et dans le Temple de la Raison de la Section Régénérée de Beaurepaire... les 20 et 25 nivôse, l'an 2eme*, A. N. F17-1010a, no. 3015, p. 7.

¹³¹ A. P. vol. 80, pp. 533-4. For the Commune's decree that 'nulle corporation ne pourra, sous aucun prétexte que ce soit, célébrer la fête de l'inauguration de Lepeletier et de Marat', see Caron, *Paris pendant la Terreur*, vol. ii, p. 192 and *Le Père Duchesne*, no. 315, 29 November 1793, p. 5.

¹³² In breach of the Commune's decree, the section de Beaurepaire continued to prepare for a festival in memory of Marat on nivôse 20, raising 3,000 livres in the process. Caron, *Paris pendant la Terreur*, vol. ii, p. 239. For the proposed fête in prairial, see *Projet de la cérémonie funèbre pour l'inauguration des bustes de Lepeletier, Marat et Chalier présenté à l'assemblée générale de la section Marat par le citoyen Martin, sculpteur*, (Paris, 1794) B. H. V. P. no. 966095, and for the Committee's rôle in banning it, Soboul, *Les sans-culottes Parisiens*, pp. 976-8.

to the decision to call a halt to the sections' devotions, but the thinking behind this clampdown both transcended partisan concerns and predated official unease about dechristianisation. The suppression of the cult of Marat was also a response to the fear that had lain half-submerged in Robespierre's outburst in the Jacobins on 14 July, in Prudhomme's condemnation of the *sans-culottes* 'faux zèle' two weeks later, and in the monstrous 'profanation' of 'cérémonies religieuses pour Marat, comme on en faisait pour les saints' that Hébert eventually disowned in November.¹³³ It was the fear that the language of Revolutionary martyrdom retained too many traces of its religious roots to be translated to the political sphere without some risk of confusion between the two realms. It was the fear that Brochet alone dared name openly, the fear that the cult of Marat contained 'des germes de fanatisme.'¹³⁴ If this fear had not been real, there would have been no need for the *Feuille de Salut Public*'s warning in frimaire that: 'il ne faut point élever autel sur autel, et substituer à de vieilles divinités des divinités nouvelles', or for advice such as this a few months later:

Célébrons la mémoire de ces martyrs généraux, ne les adorons pas... Rendons à la vertu ses dignes hommages, mais n'oublions pas que les martyrs de la liberté furent des mortels comme nous.¹³⁵

These are not the terms of normal political debate, even in the year II, when what constituted normality was little more than a distant memory. On the contrary, these repeated warnings express an anxiety that the tributes paid to Marat's memory had crossed the line between vulgar hero-worship and an aberrant, possibly even idolatrous, devotion to 'les Saints de la Patrie'.¹³⁶ The tomb in the Cordeliers was no Saint-Médard and the *sans-culottes* were no *convulsionnaires*, but this was an anxiety that Jean Laurent's crude sketch of weeping *citoyennes* kneeling before Marat's grave could have done little to allay.¹³⁷ (See Figure 10)

¹³³ *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 211, 3 August 1793, p. 61, and *A. M.* no. 71, 11 frimaire an II, p. 549.

¹³⁴ *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 211, 3 August 1793, p. 61.

¹³⁵ *Feuille de Salut Public*, no. 162, 10 frimaire an II, p. 4, and Henriquez, *Fêtes nationales et Religieuses: Hommage à l'Être Suprême, chants civiques...*, (Paris, s. d.) B. L., R. 179. 32, p. 19.

¹³⁶ Chauvin, *Stances irrégulières...*

¹³⁷ J.-A. Laurent, *Obsèques de Marat dans le jardin des Cordeliers*, Musée Lambinet, Versailles, inv. no. 725. The analogy with Saint-Médard did not go entirely unremarked by contemporaries, see the sarcastic allusion to François de Paris' grave in Duval, *Souvenirs de la Terreur*, vol. iii, p. 364.



Figure 10, J. A. Laurent, *Obsèques de Marat dans le jardin des Cordeliers*, Musée Lambinet, watercolour, inv. no. 725.

The language of memory meant different things to different people in Paris, and the same language could be 'agreeably opaque' in the provinces as well.¹³⁸ While moderates and militants engaged in fistfights for control of the sections, many provincials took matters one step further, and raised armies 'pour repousser l'oppression et rendre à la représentation nationale sa dignité, son intégrité, sa liberté.'¹³⁹ The federalist revolt was, in most cases, short-lived. Of the forty odd départements that opposed the purge of the Girondins in June, only fourteen actually took up arms against Paris, and only a handful of those ever posed any real military threat. However, seen from the capital, the federalist crisis appeared much graver than the facts of the matter would warrant. Indeed, part of the problem was that facts remained in short supply in Paris. As Sydenham suggests, 'the truth is that in the

¹³⁸ Forrest, 'The local politics of repression', p. 96.

¹³⁹ 'Adresse des citoyens de Rennes', *A. M.* no. 162, 11 June 1793, pp. 600-1.

summer of 1793 no one knew which places were in revolt and which were not', and this terrible uncertainty continued for months on end.¹⁴⁰ Even when federalist forces were easily overwhelmed as in the Ille-et-Vilaine, or simply imploded as in the Gironde, real political subjugation came slowly to provincial France, and it took the arrival of the *représentants en mission* in the autumn to restore some semblance of central authority.¹⁴¹ It is this context, a context of constantly shifting partisan allegiances and crippling political uncertainty, that informed the provincial politics of memory. As a result, the cult of Marat spread across the nation in a series of waves, waves determined by the geography of the revolt against the Montagne and by the speed of its repression, by the desire to protest one's loyalty to the Convention, and by the need to atone for past sins against the *République une et indivisible*. However, in the first instance, before the Montagne imposed its own brand of orthodoxy upon a recalcitrant nation, Marat's death was less an occasion for mourning than grounds for jubilation.

On the day after he was laid to rest in the Cordeliers, Rennes staged its own particular tribute to *l'ami du peuple*. Marat had long been despised in the Breton capital, but by the summer of 1793, this revulsion had reached epic proportions. In early June, the visiting *conventionnel*, Merlin, described the local authorities, then teetering on the edge of revolt, as 'fortement prononcés en faveur de la liberté et de l'égalité', but possessed by an all-consuming hatred of Marat, and their feelings were, it seems, widely shared.¹⁴² When Rennes finally declared against Paris later that month, the city's attempts to rally neighbouring towns played heavily on local antipathy towards Marat, and that antipathy found ample expression in the verses Breton troops chanted as they marched off to battle a few weeks later.¹⁴³ Even after those same troops had

¹⁴⁰ M. J. Sydenham, 'The Republican Revolt of 1793: a plea for less localised local studies', *F. H. S.* vol. ii, (1981) pp. 120-38, p. 127.

¹⁴¹ Rennes is typical in this respect. Having effectively capitulated in late July, the city was more or less left to its own devices until early September, when Carrier and Pocholle arrived from Paris, accompanied by nine companies of soldiers. Aulard, *C. S. P.* vol. vi, pp. 427-9.

¹⁴² On June 12, Merlin reported that 'on abhorre Marat' in Rennes, while Pétion recalled that 'les maratistes étaient en horreur' everywhere he went in the northwest that summer. Aulard, *C. S. P.* vol. iv, p. 532, and C. Dauban, ed., *Mémoires inédits de Pétion et mémoires de Buzot & de Barbaroux*, (Paris, 1866) p. 148.

¹⁴³ According to an address from the federalist authorities of the Calvados and the Ille-et-Vilaine, Paris deserved punishment for having, among other things, 'forcé l'élection d'un Marat et de ses vils complices.' Cited in A. Forrest, 'Federalism', in C. Lucas, ed. *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture*, vol. ii., pp. 309-27, p. 318. For the Breton troops' anathemas against

been stopped in their tracks at Brécourt, Marat retained his unique place in the affections of the Breton public. By mid-July, there was little enough reason to celebrate in Rennes, but news of Corday's crime still managed to raise spirits in the beleaguered town on 17 July. That night was spent in raucous celebration outside the homes of the town's few remaining radicals, and the following day, the festivities continued when a group of local youths set about organising a mock funeral for Marat. It was a strange sight, a grotesque cavalcade of fear and disdain laden with all the usual attributes of the carnivalesque: a hearse decorated with pigs' bladders and broken buckets, a convoy of laughing choir boys, and of course, a garish effigy of Marat. Inevitably, a bonfire marked the end of the parade, and as the guy went up in flames, the crowd roared out its hatred for 'les hommes de sang, les Marat, et les factieux'.¹⁴⁴ Even as defeat loomed, Rennes' contempt for Marat remained undimmed.

This caustic blend of commemoration and charivari is a bizarre affair. And yet, however desperate a gesture of defiance it might seem, Rennes' theatrical, even ritualised, aversion to Marat was far from unique to Brittany's short-lived stand against *anarchisme*. Similar scenes had taken place in the Ain the previous month, where Bourg's townsfolk announced their adherence to the federalist cause with another bonfire featuring 'l'exécrable Marat', and in Lyon where denunciations of the would-be dictator figured prominently in the fête staged to welcome Marseillais federalists on 29 June.¹⁴⁵ Feelings obviously ran high that summer, but there was nothing particularly new in these energetic expressions of antagonism towards the *ami du peuple*. The demagogic style, vicious denunciations and repeated calls for a quarter of a million heads had done little to endear Marat to law-abiding Jacobins over the years, and his election to the Convention scarcely enhanced this unenviable reputation. Indeed, the very thought of Marat taking his seat alongside luminaries

Marat and the 'fameux scélérats' of the Montagne, see the 'Hymne civique des Bretons marchant contre l'anarchie' and 'Hymne des Fédérés bretons', *A. h. R. f.*, xiv, (1937) pp. 461-3.

¹⁴⁴ Anon. *Lettre d'un Breton à un des Proscrits, sur le chef-d'œuvre de MM. Couthon, Héroult, Barère et compagnie, suivie de la description des honneurs incroyables rendus à Rennes, à la mémoire de Marat, le bon ami du peuple*. *R. I. P.*, (s. l., 1793) B. L. R.111, no. 26, p. 9.

¹⁴⁵ For an eye-witness account of Bourg's demonstration on June 26, see Blanq-Desisles, *Vie Révolutionnaire de Blanq-Desisles depuis 1789 dans laquelle on trouve la marche du fédéralisme dans le département de l'Ain...*, (Paris, 1794) B. L. F1331, (5), pp. 8-14. For Lyon's ceremony on the place Bellecour, see C. Riffaterre, *Le Mouvement Antijacobin à Lyon et dans le Rhône et Loire en 1793*, (Paris, 1912) vol. i, pp. 470-75.

such as Vergniaud or Condorcet inspired widespread revulsion in the provinces, a revulsion that the Girondins worked assiduously to promote, both at the tribune and in the press.¹⁴⁶ Yet, however well-tended provincial antipathy towards Marat was, that antipathy was genuine and deep-seated, as the clubs' response to a subscription drive for his new paper, the *Journal de la République Française*, would suggest. Not one club had ever signed up to the *Ami du Peuple* in the past, and in October 1792, the vast majority spurned the chance to order its successor, but several went much further.¹⁴⁷ Not content with simply refusing to subscribe, Cherbourg's Jacobins burned the sample copies they received in the post and returned the ashes to 'ce monstre inhumain', while the arrival of another prospectus prompted Bordeaux's influential *Amis de la Liberté* to protest that they would not 'souiller leur regards des œuvres impures de l'orateur des assassinats', and the society urged its affiliates to do the same.¹⁴⁸ As 1793 progressed, Marat did pick up a few subscribers among the clubs, but his national audience remained infinitesimal in comparison to that of well-regarded writers such as Gorsas or Carra.¹⁴⁹

If Marat the journalist remained virtually unread outside of the capital, Marat the *buveur du sang* and *bête noire* of the Girondin press was an all too familiar spectre in provincial politics. Widely held responsible for the September massacres, commonly (and rather more justifiably) blamed for the pillaging of Parisian stores the following February, and indelibly tainted with the charge of aspirant dictatorship, his reputation as a bloodthirsty ogre was a godsend to the Girondins in their campaign against Parisian radicalism, and Louvet's call for his arrest was widely repeated in the provinces.¹⁵⁰ By April 1793, the claim that 'toute la France accuse' Marat probably overstated the case somewhat, but the nationwide reaction to his indictment, and the

¹⁴⁶ According to a petition from the Corrèze, for example, the voters of Paris had dishonoured themselves by electing Marat, *A. P.* vol. 52, p. 605. For the defining moment in the Girondin press campaign against Marat, see Gorsas' *Épître à mon collègue et bon ami Marat* in the *Courrier des départements*, no. 21, 12 October 1792, pp. 321-4.

¹⁴⁷ Kennedy found no trace of any subscriptions to the *Ami du Peuple* among the provincial clubs. M. L. Kennedy, "L'Oracle des Jacobins des départements": Jean-Louis Carra et ses *Annales Patriotiques*, in A. Soboul, ed. *Girondins et Montagnards*, (Paris, 1977) pp. 247-68, p. 252.

¹⁴⁸ 'Extrait du procès-verbal de la séance des amis de la Liberté et de l'Égalité de Cherbourg', October 21, 1792, *Patriote Français*, no. 1180, 2 November 1792, p. 507. The *Amis de la Liberté's* address was published in the *Patriote Français*, no. 1185, 7 November 1792, p. 528.

¹⁴⁹ M. L. Kennedy, 'The Jacobin clubs and the Press - Phase Two', *F. H. S.*, vol. 13, (1984) pp. 474-99.

¹⁵⁰ The Convention received petitions to this effect on September 25, October 21 and 24, November 8 and December 23, while denunciations continued to pour into the Jacobins throughout the spring.

dismay that his acquittal produced, suggests that Boyer-Fonfrède's verdict was not too far off the mark.¹⁵¹ He may, as many Montagnards later claimed, have had little or no real influence on national politics, but in 1793, Marat's symbolic value was enormous.¹⁵² Just as the metropolitan *sans-culotterie* invested their *ami* with a totemic importance, so across much of France, he had come to epitomise everything that was rotten with Parisian politics. In cities where the mere mention of his name was enough to stymie all attempt at compromise with the capital, Marat, the man and the principles that he stood for, was what federalism was all about.¹⁵³

For cities in revolt, Marat was an obvious target for anti-Parisian propaganda, but *l'ami du peuple* found few acolytes among the more militant sections of provincial society either. A majority of clubs had probably opted for the Montagne by the spring of 1793, but even so, most provincial radicals either ignored Marat's existence or disowned him as an embarrassment. Strasbourg's *sociétaires* opted for the former tactic in November 1792 and six months later, the stony silence that greeted Marat's impeachment would suggest that few provincial radicals were any more willing to associate themselves with his cause in 1793.¹⁵⁴ Indeed that May, the working class militants of Bordeaux's section Francklin, the very men who would form the mainstay of the Terror in the city that autumn, even felt obliged to release a public statement denying rumours that the section had any 'maratiste' tendencies.¹⁵⁵ Certainly, there were the small-town *ultras*, men such as the self-styled 'Marat' Chaix in Corbigny, or Rollet-Marat in Bourg who took *l'ami du peuple* as their model, but they remained a

¹⁵¹ A. P. vol. 61, p. 640. Marat's acquittal was greeted with dismay in the provinces, and allegedly even drove one young man in Lyon to take his own life. *Thermomètre du Jour*, no. 494, 8 May 1793.

¹⁵² Although he maintained that: 'jamais Marat n'exerça sur la Convention une influence quelconque', Levasseur nevertheless bemoaned the Girondin tendency to tar all Montagnards with the *maratiste* brush: 'les Girondins profitèrent-ils de sa fatale réputation pour diriger contre nous d'odieuses implications.' Levasseur de la Sarthe, *Mémoires*, vol. i, pp. 308 and 65. Desmoulins had already expressed similar views in frimaire an II, and twenty years later, Paganel's analysis was effectively the same: 'le secte des maratistes ne fut autre chose qu'un fantôme que les girondins montraient à toute la France.' *Le Vieux Cordelier*, no. 2, 20 frimaire, an II, p. 37, and P. Paganel, *Essai historique et critique sur la Révolution Française*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1815) vol. ii, p. 171.

¹⁵³ Treillard and Mathieu attributed their torrid reception in Bordeaux in late June and the subsequent failure of their conciliatory mission there to a rumour that Marat had just been named mayor of Paris. *Compte de la mission des représentans du peuple, Treillard et Mathieu, délégués dans les départemens de la Gironde, Lot-et-Garonne et départemens voisins*, (Paris, 1793) B. N. Le39/29, p. 14.

¹⁵⁴ Congratulating the conduct of the Parisian deputies one by one, the Strasbourg club conspicuously failed to mention Marat at all. *Journal des débats et de la correspondance*, no. 127, 10 November 1792. For the clubs' muted reaction to Marat's trial, see Kennedy, *The Jacobin Clubs*, vol. ii, p. 357.

¹⁵⁵ Forrest, *Society and Politics in Revolutionary Bordeaux*, p. 172. Even if this disclaimer was entirely self-serving, the mere fact that it was released is indicative of Marat's standing in the city as a whole.

distinct, albeit vocal, minority within provincial Jacobinism.¹⁵⁶ Beloved of the Parisian *sans-culotterie*, but disowned by all but the most extreme elements of provincial society, Marat was, in the eyes of mainstream Revolutionary opinion, the very incarnation of evil.

It may seem like something of a digression to examine Marat's reputation at such length, but in order to understand what his death meant beyond Paris, it is essential to grasp the sheer horror with which most provincial Jacobins viewed him in life. Obviously, not all clubs were quite so hostile to the *ami du peuple*, and when the time came, several were quick to express their anger at his assassination. A few deplored it as a 'sacrilège' and denounced the murderess as an unnatural harridan, a handful demanded his immediate pantheonisation, and one club even repeated Callières de l'Étang's macabre suggestion that his corpse should tour the country as an object lesson in Montagnard virtue.¹⁵⁷ However, the trickle of addresses that reached the Convention in the weeks following Marat's murder suggests that few provincials felt any great desire to mark his passing with any grand spectacle. They had been loath to come to his defence in April, and three months later, they were almost equally reluctant to honour his memory. The pitiful circumstances of his death were not enough, as Augustin Robespierre had cynically hoped and David evidently expected, to 'démaratiser Marat' in the eyes of a sceptical provincial public, and it would take much more than the pathos of David's portrait to banish the memory of so much bloodcurdling rhetoric. For all but a few in the very vanguard of provincial opinion, the *ami du peuple* still evoked, if not outright revulsion, then a discomfort bordering on disgust, and this ambivalence emerges clearly in these early reactions to his murder. Despite the vows to avenge Marat's death, the tributes that accompanied them were often grudging, and Pierre-Joseph Briot was not alone in urging a meeting in Besançon to 'tirer un voile religieux sur des écarts et des exagérations qui peut-être

¹⁵⁶ For Marat-Chaix, see Cobb, *Les Armées Révolutionnaires*, vol. ii, pp. 61-6. For Rollet-Marat, see the attack on him in *Discours prononcé à la Convention par Boisset représentative du peuple au retour de sa mission dans les départements de l'Ain...*, (Paris, an III) B. L. F.1250.7, p. 2.

¹⁵⁷ The Jacobins of both Auxerre and Metz described his murder in these terms, while Tonnerre's radical *Société des Amis de la République* explained Corday's crime by declaring that 'l'Hymen n'avait pas encore éclairé son lit de ses chastes flambeaux.' A. P. vol. 69, pp. 351 and 587, and vol. 72, p. 138. The *Société Républicain d'Autun* was one of the few clubs to call for Marat's immediate pantheonisation, A. P. vol. 70, p. 154. For Belfort's demand on the 23rd of July that his 'cadavre ensanglanté' be 'offert aux regards du peuple', *ibid.* pp. 153-4. The idea had been first mooted in the Cordeliers on the 15th by Callières de l'Étang. A. M. no. 198, 17 July 1793, p. 142.

ont affligé son cœur'.¹⁵⁸ It was the same advice the Jacobin club had offered its affiliates after the September massacres, and it is a measure of Marat's infamy that he called to mind such a parallel. By the autumn of 1793, Revolutionaries had grown increasingly accustomed to drawing a veil over the excesses of the past, but even so, Marat's memory still rankled in the provinces.

In life, Marat had polarised public opinion more than any other politician, and in death, his memory proved equally divisive. The Yonne's experience of commemoration illustrates this plainly. Indeed, in many respects, the *département's* reaction to Marat's death is a microcosm of how the nation as a whole remembered the *ami du peuple*. Close to the capital, both physically and politically, the Yonne was one of the first *départements* to hear of his murder, but despite this proximity to Paris, its principal towns reacted to the news in quite different ways. By mid-1793, its *chef-lieu*, Auxerre, had acquired a reputation as one of the leading bastions of provincial radicalism, and in Nicolas Maure, it had produced something of a rarity, a *conventionnel* who genuinely liked and admired Marat.¹⁵⁹ Under Maure's influence, Auxerre had been one of the few towns to condemn Marat's impeachment in April,¹⁶⁰ and in July, its club was among the first to express its outrage following his assassination. It was a short address, and having conveyed their regrets as succinctly as possible, the *clubistes* quickly drew the obvious conclusion from the terrible deed. Insisting that conspirators still lurked in the capital, the Auxerrois demanded a fresh round of arrests to protect the 'partie saine de la Convention.' Summoning down 'tous les tourments' on the heads of those responsible, the club's cry for vengeance was impressive, but there was nevertheless something hollow about the Auxerrois' rather detached sense of 'indignation.'¹⁶¹ There was certainly none of the grief that had organised three separate ceremonies for Lepeletier in the spring or that remembered him on the anniversary of his death a year later, but then Lepeletier was a

¹⁵⁸ P.-J. Briot, *Éloge de Marat prononcé le jour de la pompe funèbre qui a eu lieu à Besançon le 25 août*, (Besançon, 1793) B. H. V. P. no. 96, 2770, p. 26. This was faint praise, but even so, Briot's attitude had evolved sharply since June when he had written to the local paper, the *Vedette*, denying that he had ever professed 'les principes de la Montagne, c'est-à-dire de Marat.' Cited in M. Dayet, 'La mission de P.-J. Briot, député de la société populaire de Besançon auprès de la Convention Nationale en mai 1795', *A. h. R. f.*, vol. vi, (1929) pp. 279-87, p. 282.

¹⁵⁹ This radicalism can be partly attributed to the family ties that bound several militants to activists in the *Finistère* and *l'Homme Armé* sections in Paris. Cobb, *Les Armées Révolutionnaires*, vol. i, p. 246.

¹⁶⁰ Maure presented this address to the Jacobins personally. Aulard, *Jacobins*, vol. iii, p. 155. He was also, with David, the last deputy to see Marat alive. Wildenstein, *Documents*, p. 55.

¹⁶¹ 'Adresse de la société populaire d'Auxerre', *A. P.* vol. 69, p. 351.

local man, and his loss was mourned more intensely for that reason.¹⁶² Marat was not a local, he was not even French, and having made their point to the Convention, the Auxerrois promptly forgot about their *ami*. No great spectacle followed this initial expression of outrage, and it took the municipality a full year before it staged any festival in honour of Marat. Even then, his bust had to share centre-stage with a throng of other 'bienfaiteurs de l'humanité'; not that this mattered much on 20 messidor *an II* because the townsfolk simply stayed away, busying themselves with their everyday affairs in an ostentatious display of indifference to the new *culte décadaire*.¹⁶³ By July 1794, the Revolution had obviously lost much of its lustre, but even so, the public apathy in messidor was not so very different from the club's complacent response to Marat's murder a year earlier. Then, his death had served a purpose; it was, as one deputy later recalled, 'politique d'exploiter au profit du mouvement républicain', but it hardly evoked the depth of feeling that it inspired among the Parisian *sans-culotterie*.¹⁶⁴ Even in this stronghold of the Montagne, Marat's death gave rise to no real grief, just a rather insipid 'indignation'.

Confronted by the death of Marat, the first instinct of Auxerre's Montagnards was not commemorative, but punitive, overwhelmingly so in fact, and in this they were typical of radical opinion across the Republic as a whole. Montauban's Jacobins, echoing Marat's long standing belief that heads must roll to save the Revolution, promptly forwarded an address to Paris demanding that 'un million tombent pour nous venger de sa mort', and their colleagues in Troyes were just as forthright in their demand for immediate and bloody vengeance.¹⁶⁵ In the Indre-et-Loire, the Jacobins of Amboise were equally implacable. Calling on the Convention to pass 'des grands mesures', the *clubistes* concluded their lament for the dead journalist with the ominous, if slightly incongruous, advice: 'ne craignez pas de blesser la liberté des opinions, cette liberté

¹⁶² For these tributes, see Hohl, 'Les Fêtes à Auxerre', p. 130, and Garnier's account of the 'peuple nombreuse' that turned out in Lepeletier's honour in April 1793. Aulard, *C. S. P.* vol. iii, p. 249.

¹⁶³ According to one diarist: 'le mépris du peuple était tel qu'il n'observait pas la cessation du travail... tandis qu'il chômait publiquement les dimanches et fêtes catholiques. Il n'avait que du dégoût pour les arlequinades et spectacles qu'on lui présentait.' Quoted in Hohl, 'Les Fêtes à Auxerre', p. 157.

¹⁶⁴ Levasseur de la Sarthe, *Mémoires*, vol. i, p. 308.

¹⁶⁵ 'Adresse de la Société Populaire de Montauban... le 19 juillet 1793', *A. P.* vol. lxix, p. 424. Similarly, Troyes' *clubistes* insisted that 'le sang de Marat crie vengeance'. *Ibid.* p. 459.

n'est pas de dire ce qu'on pense, mais de penser et de faire de bien.'¹⁶⁶ Occasionally, these fiery sentiments were followed by more considered displays of devotion to Marat's memory. Some towns promised to raise memorials 'aux mânes de Marat', and a few, like Langres, actually kept their word, but in general, such spontaneity was in short supply.¹⁶⁷ The pageantry, the inauguration of busts and the dedication of street corners, would come later that winter, when the example of the Parisian sections became too pressing to ignore, but in August, the clubs were in no great hurry to honour the *ami du peuple*. Initially at least, the desire to remember ceded to the more urgent impulse to seek revenge.

In Auxerre, Marat's murder had played its duly allotted rôle. Just as Billaud-Varenne had used his death to demand an intensification of the repression, so, for Auxerre's Montagnards, the only possible response to this 'coup affreux' was to set the Terror in motion. However, this was neither the capricious vengeance sought by the Parisian *sans-culotterie* nor the very *maratiste* retribution demanded by the Montalbanais, but the more measured repression favoured by the Montagnard elite, and it is a mark of Maure's influence that the Auxerrois toed the party line so faithfully. Maure's writ did not, however, run quite so readily through the rest of the Yonne, and nearby Avallon's reaction to Marat's death displayed a quite different set of political values. The Avallonnais deputy, Jacques Boilleau, had long been one of Marat's fiercest critics in the Convention and following his advice, the town, uniquely in the Yonne, had sided with the Girondins in June.¹⁶⁸ Although Maure later blamed Boilleau for having led the townsfolk temporarily astray, there was nothing temporary about their reluctance to honour Marat.¹⁶⁹ It took a good five months, Boilleau's execution, and the even more harrowing arrival of the Parisian *armée révolutionnaire* in late brumaire to persuade the Avallonnais to stage a 'fête civique en l'honneur de ce martyr de la liberté'.¹⁷⁰ Even then, it needed a visiting army officer to finally force the recently renamed *société des sans-culottes d'Avallon's* hand in the matter.

¹⁶⁶ 'Adresse des sans-culottes républicains d'Amboise', *A. P.* vol. 70, p. 337. The club's demand rests rather uncomfortably with Marat's oft-repeated insistence that 'la liberté de tout dire n'a d'ennemis que ceux qui veulent se réserver la liberté de tout faire.' *Ami du Peuple*, no. 181, 4 August 1790, p. 4.

¹⁶⁷ Langres made good its promise to raise a pyramid 'aux manes de Marat' a week after his death.

'Lettre des citoyens composant la société populaire de Langres', *A. P.* vol. 69, p. 389.

¹⁶⁸ 'La Société des Amis de la Constitution et la Société des Sans Culottes à Avallon', *Bulletin de la Société d'études d'Avallon*, no. 58, (1918) pp. 109-209, pp. 160-2.

¹⁶⁹ Aulard, *C. S. P.*, vol. vii, p. 578 and vol. ix, p. 454.

¹⁷⁰ 'La Société des Amis de la Constitution et la Société des Sans Culottes à Avallon', p. 171.

Whereas Auxerre had reacted swiftly, if a little sparingly, to the death of Marat, Avallon had to be coerced into honouring his memory. The contrast illustrates the extent to which an individual deputy could influence a town's attitude to commemoration, but it also suggests that many clubs' belated conversion to the new orthodoxy went no more than skin deep. Despite their supposed political renaissance, the Avallonnais' commitment to the *sans-culotte* cause, and to the memory of its heroes, was a matter of pragmatism rather than principle.

Auxerre and Avallon had taken very different political paths that summer, but urban political allegiances were rarely this cut and dried in 1793. On the contrary, volatility was the defining feature of local politics across most of France that summer, and for this reason, neighbouring Tonnerre appears to offer the most telling example of what the commemoration of the Revolution's dead had come to mean in provincial France. At first glance, Tonnerre would seem to have surpassed even Auxerre in righteous indignation upon hearing of Marat's murder. In the eight weeks that followed his death, the town dispatched six separate addresses to the Convention and staged no fewer than five different festivals in honour of 'l'apôtre le plus ardent de la liberté'. Few other places lavished so much attention on Marat's memory, and on the face of it, this furore would seem to suggest an extraordinary degree of Revolutionary fervour. Indeed, Gumbrecht has singled out Tonnerre's response to Marat's death for its ardent attempt to articulate the 'savoir intériorisé des sans-culottes' in discursive and ceremonial terms.¹⁷¹ That may be so, but the circumstances that inspired these insistent devotions were rather less exalted than Gumbrecht assumes. In Tonnerre, commemoration had less to do with the mechanics of Montagnard discourse than it did with the dynamics of communal conflict, a conflict in which the stakes were not some intangible 'savoir', but political, even physical, survival.

News of Marat's murder reached Tonnerre a fortnight after an acrimonious split had torn the town asunder, setting the local radicals against the moderate municipality. The *causus belli* had been the militants' proposal to send an address to Paris congratulating the Commune on its rôle in purging the Convention.¹⁷² After a

¹⁷¹ H. U. Gumbrecht, 'Persuader ceux qui pensent comme vous: Les fonctions du discours épidictique sur la mort de Marat', *Poétique*, no. 39, (1979) pp. 363-84, p. 379.

¹⁷² For this schism, see G. Moreau, *Tonnerre pendant la Révolution*, (Tonnerre, 1890) pp. 149-53.

weeklong debate, the address was finally passed and the moderates ousted from the town hall, but the dispute left Tonnerre's Jacobin club irretrievably 'divisé'.¹⁷³ The radicals decamped to a former Ursuline convent, hence their ironic soubriquet, the *Religieuses*, while the moderates took refuge in the *église de l'Hôpital* under the equally disingenuous title of the *Amis de la République une et indivisible*. Tonnerre's bloodless revolution was, in its own way, typical of the various coups and counter-coups that took place in town halls throughout France that summer, but this was small consolation to the lawyers and merchants who had fallen so precipitously from the positions of power they had occupied unchallenged since 1789. Sensing that the tide had turned dangerously against them, the members of the *club de l'Hôpital* were left with no alternative but to either resign themselves to the political wilderness or to reinvent themselves as enthusiastic radicals. There was no choice really. Virtually overnight, the moderates became more *sans-culotte* than the *sans-culottes* themselves, and to set the seal on this conversion, they adopted Marat's memory as a token of their regeneration.

Whether this about turn was aimed solely at a Parisian audience or was intended for local consumption as well remains open to question, but in the short term, the *Hôpital's* sudden espousal of *maratisme* was probably a matter of simple self-preservation. The *Religieuses* had been quick to denounce 'nos fédéralistes' to the Convention in July, and the charge that they had displayed a 'joie indécente et déplacée' on hearing of Marat's death demanded decisive rebuttal.¹⁷⁴ That rebuttal arrived in the capital in early August when Percheron delivered an exuberantly over-the-top *Éloge funèbre de Marat* before the Commune as a sign of the club's 'sentiments les plus fraternels envers la commune de Paris'.¹⁷⁵ Republican righteousness gushed from its impassioned invocation of Marat's 'génie imposante', while the promise that 'son buste, en nous rappelant tout ce qu'il a fait, nous apprendra ce que nous aurons à faire' literally oozed sincerity.¹⁷⁶ Percheron's *Éloge* was one of the most extravagant of its kind written anywhere in France, but more to

¹⁷³ Maure to the Committee of Public Safety, Aulard, *C. S. P.* vol. vii, p. 50.

¹⁷⁴ 'Adresse des membres de la société républicaine de Tonnerre le 17 juillet.' *A. P.* vol. 69, pp. 349-50.

¹⁷⁵ *Éloge funèbre de Marat prononcé à la Société de Amis de la République, une et indivisible, séante en la ci-devant église de l'Hôpital, à Tonnerre, le 4 août, l'an deuxième de la République*, (Auxerre, 1793) B. N. Ln27/13397. For Percheron's speech in Paris, *A. M.* no. 244, 12 August 1793, p. 362.

¹⁷⁶ *Éloge funèbre de Marat prononcé à la Société de Amis de la République...*, p. 3.

the point, it surpassed anything the *Religieuses* had avowed in their address to the Convention a week earlier. While the radicals had suffered 'la douleur la plus vive' on hearing of Marat's murder, the moderates, not to be outdone, declared themselves 'frappés de stupeur' by the news, and when the *Religieuses* lauded their *ami* as a latter-day Gracchus, the *Hôpital* went one better, hailing him as another Romulus, a second Prometheus, a French Elijah, a modern Moses.¹⁷⁷ Upstaging the *Religieuses* was the main, perhaps the only, point of Percheron's *Éloge*, and this relentless rhetorical *surenchère* soon extended to the ritual sphere as well. Rival busts were unveiled in quick succession in August, and when the radicals staged an elaborate apotheosis in honour of the 'plus grand martyr de la Révolution' on 8 September, their adversaries announced a similar ceremony for the following week, and threw in Lepeletier, Voltaire, and Rousseau for good measure.¹⁷⁸

Paris was kept scrupulously informed of these developments, but despite its frenetic one-upmanship, the *club de l'Hôpital* was always one step behind the *Religieuses* in its attempts to win the Convention's confidence. The moderates constantly had to live down the charge that they had rejoiced at Marat's murder, but even more damagingly, their increasingly *outré* efforts had little effect on a Convention forewarned by Maure against a band of 'aristocrates' masquerading 'sous un coloris très patriotique.'¹⁷⁹ Worst of all, the *Hôpital's* extravagant attention to Marat's memory failed to impress their fellow Tonnerrois. On September 15, the club's last, desperate attempt to invoke Marat's protection, a grand procession to mark the installation of his bust, provoked a 'collision sanglante' between the *clubistes* and a detachment of jeering volunteers, which, reports claimed, left three dead and several injured. A summer of scuffles had finally climaxed in an explosion of violence which the Convention could no longer afford to ignore, and a deputy was immediately dispatched to restore order.¹⁸⁰ The *club de l'Hôpital* was unceremoniously shut down, twelve of its members hauled before the Revolutionary Tribunal, and the town placed under the rule of an

¹⁷⁷ 'Discours d'Apothéose du citoyen Marat, l'ami du peuple, prononcé dans la société Républicaine des sans-culottes Montagnards de Tonnerre, séant aux ci-devant Ursulines, le 28 juillet 1793... par Charles-Louis Rousseau', A. P. vol. 72, pp. 643-5, and *Éloge funèbre de Marat*..., pp. 2, 6 and 8.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid and A. M. no. 265, 22 September 1793, p. 711.

¹⁷⁹ Maure's warning was delivered on August 17. A. P. vol. 72, p. 324.

¹⁸⁰ The casualty figures, which Maure later dismissed as exaggerated, were reported in the *Moniteur*. A. M. no. 268, 25 September 1793, p. 729. For Garnier de l'Aube's dispatch to restore order and the subsequent closure of the *club de l'Hôpital*, see Aulard, C. S. P. vol. vii, pp. 55 and 173-7.

unforgiving local *ultra*, Jacques Chérest.¹⁸¹ The club's commemorative charade had caused precisely that which it was designed to prevent: Marat's memory, its use and abuse, had brought the Terror crashing down on Tonnerre.

Commemoration was the catalyst that brought three months of communal conflict to a head in Tonnerre. However, if the rioting remembrance unleashed in September was unique to the Yonne, the département nevertheless exemplifies how Marat was remembered in the provinces because, for all the processions and eulogies, few provincials seem to have genuinely mourned his death. Compelled to commemorate at the point of a bayonet, Avallon's reluctant festivities are an extreme example of this, but Auxerre's efforts were hardly any more sincere. Despite the violence of their rhetoric, the Auxerrois' distress was a perfunctory affair, a matter of political convenience rather than the real regret that had honoured Lepeletier so generously in the spring. By contrast, Tonnerre offers a more complex, but possibly more typical, example of what Revolutionary remembrance had come to mean as the Terror got under way. For all their exaggerated appeals to Marat's memory, the clubs' ritualised rivalry had little to do with the *ami du peuple*. It was not devotion to his memory that prompted this explosion of commemorative activity, still less the internalisation of any 'discours épidictique', but fear, fear of the very real consequences that losing power had come to mean in 1793. Defeat and desperation were the driving forces behind Tonnerre's frantic commemorative cycle, and in this, the town's dispossessed moderates were anything but alone. As the autumn wore on, and the machinery of the Terror was set up in towns and villages throughout France, this sense of desperation slowly extended across the Republic like a shroud. With it, the celebration of Marat's memory gradually spread from the citadels of the Montagne to communes all over the country. As Paris regained control of France, Marat became less an icon of triumphant *sans-culottisme* than a token of demoralized submission.

This equation between commemoration and capitulation was nowhere more evident than in Bordeaux, where a grandiose festival in memory of Marat on 26 September signalled the final, shambolic collapse of the city's stand against the Convention. In sharp contrast to the barracking they had received on first reaching Bordeaux, Tallien

¹⁸¹ Like many another local terrorist, Chérest paid the price for this short-lived ascendancy in 1795, when a mob attacked his house, forcing him into hiding. Cobb, *The Police and the People*, p. 151.

and Ysabeau, the Montagnard deputies charged with suppressing federalism in the Gironde, were welcomed at the festival with open arms, and the whole affair culminated in a rousing chorus of the *Marseillaise*. Glowing reports of this 'grande pompe' and the excited crowds that cheered it on were hurriedly dispatched to Paris as incontrovertible evidence of 'une métamorphose totale dans notre ville depuis quelques jours', but the city's sudden change of heart did not stop there.¹⁸² A week later, Bordeaux's adoption of the *ami du peuple* as its patron saint gathered pace when the notoriously conservative section Simonneau changed its name to section Marat, hoping that the gesture would 'donner à ses concitoyens une nouvelle preuve de sa régénération.'¹⁸³ Given the section's reputation as 'le plus infesté d'aristocratie' in the city, this was a conversion of Pauline proportions, but the reality of Bordeaux's symbolic *volte-face* was probably a good deal more wretched than either the press or the sections dared pretend.¹⁸⁴ After the unrelenting opprobrium that had been heaped on Marat throughout the year, Henri Riouffe's coruscating account of the apotheosis of the *ami du peuple* seems rather more plausible than all the press reports of a city transformed:

On regardait en silence cette procession traverser les rues, et n'entraînent après elle que quelques vagabondes, comme un égout qui entraîne les immondices après l'orage.¹⁸⁵

Riouffe was an unrepentant Girondin, but he was also a very shrewd observer of the Terror, and this contemptuous verdict cannot easily be dismissed, especially as few Montagnards were any more impressed by the city's transparent attempts to curry favour. In early October, Tallien dismissed Bordeaux's attempts to exploit Marat's memory as evidence of its revolutionary rebirth in equally caustic terms:

On célèbre, il est vrai, des fêtes en l'honneur de Marat; mais ce sont de pures grimaces. La faim et la peur ont seules rallié pour un instant les vingt-huit sections.¹⁸⁶

Undeterred by Tallien's blunt grasp of political reality, the 'grimaces' went on well into the winter. The arrival of a delegation from the Paris Commune prompted another round of pageantry in November, but these earnest affirmations of Republican orthodoxy proved equally unconvincing. Reporting back to the capital in brumaire,

¹⁸² Aulard, *C. S. P.* vol. vii, p. 106, *Le Courrier Français*, no. 279, 6 October 1793, p. 279, and *Journal de la Montagne*, no. 128, 8 October 1793, p. 921.

¹⁸³ Quoted in Forrest, *Society and Politics in Revolutionary Bordeaux*, p. 231.

¹⁸⁴ This was Ysabeau's assessment of the section Simmoneau. Aulard, *C. S. P.* vol. vii, p. 106.

¹⁸⁵ H.-J. Riouffe, *Mémoires d'un détenu, pour servir à l'histoire de la tyrannie de Robespierre*, (Paris, an III) p. 13.

¹⁸⁶ *A. M.* no. 25, 25 vendémiaire an II, p. 121 cited in Forrest, *Society and Politics in Revolutionary Bordeaux*, p. 225.

Dunouy denounced the 'prétendu patriotique' clubs' attempts to appropriate the martyrs of the Montagne for their own ends, and concluded bitterly that both Marat and Lepeletier remained 'tout-à-fait inconnus' in the city.¹⁸⁷

Bordeaux's desperate posturing is an extreme example of the cynicism that characterised the commemorations of the year II, but the scepticism that greeted these efforts did not stop others from trying to do the same. As the revolt against Paris petered out, it was in precisely those areas where federalism had gained the most ground that Marat's memory was honoured with the most vociferous urgency. While the resurgence of radical societies such as Bordeaux's *Club National* goes part of the way towards explaining this proliferation of *fêtes funèbres*, it is insufficient to explain either their timing or the insistence with which they were staged. Rather, it was the approach of a *représentant en mission* and the fear of retribution that he brought with him that drove most provincials to reconsider their spiritual debt to the *ami du peuple*. Elsewhere in Aquitaine, Dartigoeyte's return to the Landes prompted a spate of similar ceremonies in brumaire, while in the east, Simond and Dumas' presence in Mont-Blanc persuaded Chambéry's club to demonstrate its return to the Republican fold with another example of conspicuous conformism in December.¹⁸⁸ Confessing that they had momentarily succumbed 'à la perfide doctrine des Brissot et des Roland', Chambéry's *clubistes* concluded their celebrations with the promise that 'chacun de nous soit un Marat, et jure d'être Marat jusqu'à la mort.' This penitent pose was doubtless designed to make up for the club's all too evident lapses in the past, but such candour had its limits and the *clubistes* sensibly neglected to remind the Convention that they had called for Marat's head just a few months before.¹⁸⁹ Chambéry's decision to make a clean breast of the past found few imitators, but the same anxiety to redeem reputations tarnished by even the briefest flirtation with federalism was evident in towns and villages throughout France that winter.

¹⁸⁷ *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 215, 30 brumaire an II, pp. 233-4.

¹⁸⁸ For the Landes, see for example, the 'tombe funèbre' raised in Villeneuve on brumaire 19, *A. P.* vol. 81, p. 695, and the *procès-verbal* of Dax's 'fête vraiment républicaine' in *A. N.*, F/1cI/84, no. 1408.

¹⁸⁹ *Procès-Verbal de la Fête de l'Inauguration d'un nouveau temple, destiné aux séances de la Société régénérée des Amis de la République...*, séante à Chambéry, (s. l., s. d.) B. L., F69*, no. 17, p. 12. For Chambéry's earlier attitude to Marat, see Kennedy, *The Jacobin clubs*, vol. ii, p. 340.

The arrival of a vengeful Montagnard, particularly when he was accompanied by a detachment of armed *révolutionnaires*, proved a remarkably effective *aide-mémoire*. However, the celebration of Marat's memory was not always imposed from outside, and there were towns where raising a monument or staging a procession did represent something of a revolution in local politics. In Bourg for example, the erection of a black marble plinth bearing Marat's bust testified to the changes that had taken place in the town since the day in June when a crowd had paraded through the streets chanting 'À la guillotine Marat' before flinging his effigy onto a bonfire in the town square.¹⁹⁰ Unveiled amidst enormous pomp on the same spot five months later, the inscriptions on Bourg's sombre new memorial were explicitly designed to expiate the memory of this outrage.¹⁹¹ Indeed, the entire inauguration ceremony was conceived as a vast act of atonement in which the townsfolk first renounced the error of their ways by consigning a hideous, serpent-covered 'monstre du fédéralisme' to the flames before finally embracing the joys of Republican fraternity with an open-air banquet in the grounds of the nearby monastery of Brou. The 20th of brumaire was designed as a day of both reparation and rehabilitation, and it was, according to Bourg's mayor, the avowed *maratiste* Blanq-Desisles, a tremendous success.¹⁹² However, it is probably more accurate to say that this spectacle represented the town's unwilling subjugation to a deeply unpopular *société populaire*.¹⁹³ Marble monuments and press reports of euphoric crowds were all very well, but Bourg's reintegration into the bosom of the Republic was questionable to say the very least. For all their assertions of symbolic ascendancy, the radicals' grip on power remained tenuous throughout November, and less than a month after unveiling his memorial, Desisles was on the road to Mâcon to enlist the services of Claude Javogues and the Parisian *armée révolutionnaire* to 'raviver le patriotisme' of a population still 'infecté par le fédéralisme'.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁰ The June riot is recounted in *Vie Révolutionnaire de Blanq-Desisles...*, pp. 8-14.

¹⁹¹ Of the four inscriptions that adorned the sides of the plinth, two declared sententiously: 'Ici les fédéralistes ont brûlé l'effigie de Marat' and 'Ici les sans-culottes ont rendu justice aux vertus de Marat.' My thanks to Mme Nivière of the Musée du Brou and M Chevalier of the Musée de la Révolution Française in Vizille for supplying me with photographs of the surviving plaques.

¹⁹² *Journal de Ville Affranchi*, no. 18, 18 frimaire an II, pp. 105-6.

¹⁹³ Earlier in the summer, Bourg's *société populaire* had numbered just eight members, and while the arrival of a group of Parisian militants in October produced a surge in recruitment, it still proved difficult to find enough literate radicals to man the new municipality. P. Caron, ed, *Rapports des Agents du Ministre de l'Intérieur dans les départements*, 2 vols., (Paris. 1913) vol. i, p. 226.

¹⁹⁴ *Discours prononcé sur la place Marat par le citoyen Blanq-Desisles maire, à l'armée révolutionnaire parisienne, arrivée le 19 frimaire, an II*, reprinted in Dubois, *Histoire de la Révolution dans l'Ain*, vol. iv, pp. 77-86.

Some provincial towns were genuinely transformed by the appearance of a deputy on mission or the arrival of a band of touring *apôtres civiques*, but Bourg's experience would suggest that this transformation frequently meant little more than the imposition of a militant minority upon an intimidated majority. Desisles's admiration of Marat may have been heartfelt, but this generally detested *ultra* was hardly a representative figure in his hometown,¹⁹⁵ and the same might be said for the *sociétaires* who raised Lectoure's obelisk 'à la mémoire de Marat' or the radicals who consecrated their coming to power in Angers by commissioning a series of busts of Marat and Lepeletier on the grounds that they were 'jaloux d'avoir toujours sur nous les regards de ces héros'.¹⁹⁶ These were probably sincere sentiments too, but they were certainly not widely shared in the Ain, the Maine-et-Loire or the Gers, where Dartigoeyte's gloomy assessment of public opinion put Lectoure's lavish festivities in some sort of perspective:

Les royalistes et les fédéralistes, dont ce pays-là abonde, ne voulaient rien moins qu'égorger les Sociétés populaires, abattre le buste de Marat, arracher l'arbre de la Liberté.¹⁹⁷

It is, accordingly, difficult to agree with Bianchi's claim that the pageants held in honour of Marat were spontaneous eruptions on the part of the provincial 'foule révolutionnaire'.¹⁹⁸ Unquestionably, there were places where the *ami du peuple* was fêted with genuine gusto, but more often than not, it was groups on the fringes of political respectability, such as the radical *citoyennes* of Fontainebleau's *section du nord*, who led the way, and their progressive marginalization over the course of the winter deprived the cult of Marat of much of its potential audience in the provinces.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁵ In May 1795, four hundred locals signed a petition denouncing Blanq-Desisles 'et quelques autres scélérats' for their collaboration with Javouques during the Terror, and a few months later, the *Annales de la Religion* singled out 'l'infâme Desilles' (sic) for particular abuse in its account of the Terror in the Ain. *Dénonciation des citoyens de la commune de Bourg... à la Convention Nationale*, (Bourg, an III) B. L. F. 848, no. 4, p. 3, and *Annales de la Religion*, no. 19, 19 fructidor an III, pp. 446.

¹⁹⁶ *Procès-verbal de la fête de Marat célébrée par les sans-culottes de Lectoure le 23 brumaire de l'an II...*, A. N., C285, no. 833. For Angers's order, see A. N. F17/1007, no. 1252.

¹⁹⁷ Aulard, C. S. P. vol. x, p. 212. The situation in Angers was little better. Shortly after these busts were ordered, the town's radical newspaper, the *Esprit public*, closed down for want of subscribers. H. Gough, *The Newspaper Press in the French Revolution*, (London, 1988) p. 108.

¹⁹⁸ Contrasting the festivals in honour of Marat with the more austere cult of Reason, Bianchi argues that the former displayed more 'allégresse, ou du moins une spontanéité plus marquée' than the latter. S. Bianchi, 'Manifestations et Formes de la Déchristianisation dans le district de Corbeil', *R. H. M. C.*, vol. xxvi, (1979) pp. 256-85, p. 279.

¹⁹⁹ In Fontainebleau for instance, it was very definitely 'les citoyennes qui présidaient à la fête' held in Marat's memory in frimaire. *Précis historique de la fête de la Raison et de l'inauguration des bustes...*, B. N. Lb41/3576, p. 3. For a similar case of female initiative, see Chardon, ed. *Cahiers des Procès-Verbaux*, pp. 270-1.

Elsewhere, one should be wary of the accounts of 'saint enthousiasme' that accompanied so many of these over-anxious *procès-verbaux*.²⁰⁰ Clubs and municipalities had a vested interest in convincing Paris of their good faith, and this interest regularly embroidered the facts with self-serving tales of patriotic fervour. Telling details, the sight of an old man rejuvenated by the honour of carrying Marat's bust through the town or a Greuzian tableau of a mother consoling a tearful child for the loss of his *ami*, were a constant feature of these festive reports to the capital.²⁰¹ Such minutiae, and the more sentimental they were the better, doubtless served to relieve the monotony of these otherwise indistinguishable accounts, but they were also intended to demonstrate a town's radical credentials in the most graphic of terms. The scuffles that broke out among the *citoyennes* of Le Puy and the *clubistes* of Rouen over who should have the privilege of bearing Marat's bust in procession were probably reported with much the same end in mind.²⁰² These may well have been real fistfights, but conflicts over ceremonial precedence do not necessarily imply political consensus, especially when they take place in a district with a reputation for female fanaticism to live down or in a city so chronically out of favour as Rouen.²⁰³

The same caution should be applied to the massive crowds that allegedly attended so many of these festivities. Some may have been genuine, but Riouffe's account of events in Bordeaux would suggest that enlightened self-interest frequently amplified the attendance at these events, eagerly transforming an apathetic handful into an ecstatic multitude. Even if these crowds were real, their presence can hardly be taken as irrefutable proof of Republican zeal. As dechristianisation spread across the countryside, the abolition of the traditional feast days left a void in the social life of the community, a void these spectacles partly succeeded in filling, if only by default. Three thousand people, 'tant de la ville que de la campagne', may well have turned

²⁰⁰ *Adresse de la société populaire de Vimoutiers... le 15 ventôse an II*, A. N. F17/1010a, no. 3014.

²⁰¹ A. N. F1cl/84, no. 1961, for the senior citizen of Poligny who 'sous ce pieux fardeau, semblait avoir recouvrir les forces d'une jeunesse vigoureuse.' For the scenes of maternal desolation, see Lectoure's *Procès-verbal de la fête de Marat...*, A. N., C285, no. 833.

²⁰² A. N. F17/1010a, no. 3093, and Chardon, (ed.) *Cahiers des Procès-Verbaux*, pp. 327-30.

²⁰³ Given the townswomen's particularly emphatic refusal to participate in Le Puy's *fête de la Raison*, the *société populaire's* benign interpretation of this fracas seems particularly open to question. For the *citoyennes'* categorical rejection of dechristianisation, see O. Hufton, 'The reconstruction of a church, 1796-1801', in G. Lewis and C. Lucas, eds. *Beyond the Terror: essays in French regional and social history, 1794-1815*, (Cambridge, 1983) pp. 21-52, p. 34.

out to witness the inauguration of Bourg's monument to Marat, but how many came for the *auto-da-fé* and carmagnole that accompanied its unveiling, let alone the 'repas civique' that concluded the day's events?²⁰⁴ It is impossible to say, but it would be unwise to deny curiosity, boredom and hunger their due. In a winter of economic and moral austerity, the prospect of a bonfire and a 'banquet civique', no matter how frugal it was, followed by a dance with one of the ubiquitous 'jeunes vierges vêtues de blanc' possessed an attraction that transcended mere politics.²⁰⁵

People attend parades for many reasons, not all of them political, but as a rule, Revolutionary officialdom chose to ignore this fact. This was true of the newly installed municipalities and freshly purged *sociétés populaires* that organised these festivities, and it was equally true of many of the proconsuls for whose benefit they were staged. If embattled local authorities had a direct interest in embellishing the facts of festive life, then many *conventionnels* proved just as willing to go along with the fiction that these rites represented real enthusiasm for the Montagne on the part of a once 'égaré' populace. For the ambitious deputy touring the provinces, common sense often dictated as much. Tales of gleeful unanimity were what Paris wanted to hear, and tales of gleeful unanimity were what Paris generally got, especially in the spring of 1794 when there was no kudos to be had from bad news. On the contrary, when supplies could not be found for the armies and recruitment targets could not be met, a convincing description of a town apparently 'régénéré' by some Republican ritual might go some way towards retrieving the Committees' regard, or at least it might deflect some of their displeasure.²⁰⁶ If political guile determined the effusive tone of many of these dispatches, Revolutionary gullibility played its part as well. To the isolated and impressionable *conventionnel* cast adrift in an unfamiliar countryside, a scattering of like-minded locals might readily be mistaken for a throng of cheering *sans-culottes* and sullen resignation was easily confused with respectful enthusiasm. Laplanche's far-fetched account of the 'allégresse générale' that attended Rennes'

²⁰⁴ *Journal de Ville-Affranchi*, no. 18, 18 frimaire an II, p. 106.

²⁰⁵ For the troupes of tastefully *déshabillé* girls and dancing that invariably accompanied these fêtes, the *procès-verbal* of Montmédy's festival in honour of Marat in nivôse and the *Relation de la fête de l'inauguration des bustes de Brutus, Marat et le Pelletier célébrée le 30 ventôse an II, par la société populaire de Nogent Roule Bois* are typical. A. N. F/1cI/84, no. 2067 and A. N. F17, 1010a, no. 3011.

²⁰⁶ Roux-Fazillac's dispatches from the Dordogne are a case in point. Despite every appearance to the contrary, he claimed to have worked wonders on public opinion there, citing Périgueux's festival in honour of Marat in late brumaire as evidence that he had brought 'le thermomètre du patriotisme' back to its 'première hauteur.' Aulard, *C. S. P.* vol. viii, pp. 405-7.

republican festivities in December and Le Carpentier's equally delusional reports from refractory Saint-Malo are cases in point.²⁰⁷ Wishful thinking composed many such missives, but not all deputies were either this naïve or this wilfully self-deluding. Tallien certainly was not, and neither was Claude Javogues, whose terrifying descent on Bourg in frimaire took little notice of the town's shiny new monument, but recalled furiously the 'outrages, l'opprobre... et les ordures' done to Marat a few months earlier.²⁰⁸

Unlike some of their more credulous colleagues, Tallien and Javogues remained sceptical of these attempts to bury the past beneath a bust of Marat, and the historian should be equally wary in approaching the provincial politics of memory during the Terror. Indeed, it is almost impossible not to suspect the motives that inspired Breteuil's Jacobins to rename the town's *rue au Loup* after Marat, though doubtless the locals kept the sarcastic details of this supposedly solemn act to themselves.²⁰⁹ While such jokes at Paris' expense were in short supply that winter, fear on the other hand, was ever-present, and it was this sentiment above all that fuelled the commemorative frenzy of the year II. In one town after another, from the Ain to the Yonne, Republican regeneration came 'les armes à la main'.²¹⁰ It succeeded in inflicting a handful of zealots upon a cowed population, but it did not win many hearts and minds, and the politics of remembrance reflect this brutal reality only too clearly. It was not reverence, it was not even respect, that planned parades and purchased busts in the winter of 1793. On the contrary, for the majority of provincial Revolutionaries, it was terror, terror allied with a healthy if opportunistic instinct for self-preservation, that dictated the recourse to Marat's memory. Obviously, there

²⁰⁷ Aulard, *C. S. P.* vol. ix, pp. 784. Writing from Saint-Malo, or Port-Malo as it had become, in early February 1794, Le Carpentier was deeply impressed by the town's tribute to Marat and Lepeletier, and gushed that 'chacun s'est retiré avec le désir de mériter, comme nos deux saints, une place dans le Panthéon Français.' Aulard, *C. S. P.* vol. xi, p. 79.

²⁰⁸ *Discours prononcé par Javogues, représentant du peuple, dans la séance de la Société des Sans-Culottes républicains de Bourg, le 21 frimaire, an 2 de la République*, reprinted in Dubois, *Histoire de la Révolution dans l'Ain*, vol. iv, p. 83.

²⁰⁹ Given this district's 'audacieuse' adherence to federalism that autumn, the Breteuil club's subsequent failure to conduct any meaningful purges, and the rampaging presence of a battalion of *révolutionnaires* from the section Marat in the vicinity, it is difficult to take the sincerity of this gesture too seriously. For this ambiguous accolade, see R. Anchel, 'Les Jacobins de Breteuil', *La Révolution Française*, lxxv, (1913) pp. 481-95, p. 494. For Legendre's earlier description of the Verneuil district, Aulard, *C. S. P.* vol. vii, p. 137, and for the 3rd battalion of the *armée révolutionnaire*'s enthusiastic promotion of the cult of Marat in the Eure, Cobb, *Les Armées Révolutionnaires*, vol. ii, p. 655.

²¹⁰ Committee of Public Safety to Maure, 4 frimaire an II. Aulard, *C. S. P.*, vol. viii, p. 675.

were places where commemoration was not quite so cynical an exercise, but they were few and far between. In Arles, for example, Marat's memory may have meant something to the radicals who consecrated a Roman column in his honour in October 1793, but more importantly, it still meant something two years later when his bust was paraded through the town during the food riots of Christmas week.²¹¹ In brumaire *an II*, when demand for *maratiste* memorabilia easily exceeded the available supply, Arles' gesture was remarkable only for its antiquarian gimmickry.²¹² By nivôse *an IV*, flaunting his bust in public was a much less sensible thing to do and it seems all the more sincere an expression of radical sentiment for that. However, few other places displayed anything like the same constancy once the Terror had ended. For all the cries of 'Vive Marat' that accompanied the unveiling of a plaster bust, many clubs, even those on the left, greeted his depantheonisation in pluviôse *an III* with alacrity, and cheerfully consigned their own 'souvenir de ce monstre' to the scrap heap.²¹³ A few busts survived this holocaust, remaining forlornly on disgruntled diehards' mantelpieces, ready to be hauled out in the increasingly unlikely event of a radical revival, but most did not, and both the speed and the scope of their wreckage are significant.²¹⁴ As Marat's bust was 'mit en pièces' in towns and villages throughout France, the spring of 1795 witnessed a good deal more Revolutionary spontaneity than the rites of the Terror had ever managed to muster.²¹⁵

In the year III, of course, this particular form of vandalism was as prudent as it was popular, but not everyone was willing to wait for the reaction to set in to dispose of their bust of Marat. Whether it was news of Hébert's execution a week earlier or the seizure of hidden grain supplies that inspired the villagers of Littry, near Bayeux, to launch an attack on their *société populaire* in germinal *an II* is impossible to say. It

²¹¹ The 27 foot high column was dedicated to Marat on the 13th of brumaire, A. P. vol. 83, p. 103, and Aulard, C. S. P. vol. ix, p. 144. The later incident is recounted in Mallet du Pan, *Correspondance Inédit de Mallet du Pan avec la cour de Vienne, 1794-98*, (Paris, 1884) p. 411.

²¹² For the difficulties clubs experienced in acquiring busts of Marat in brumaire *an II*, see C. Lucas, 'Les bustes des martyrs de la liberté', A. h. R. f. vol. 43, (1971) p. 145.

²¹³ Colmar's Jacobins gleefully dispatched their bust of 'l'apôtre du massacre et de l'anarchie' as soon as they heard of his depantheonisation in February 1795. Leulliot, *Les Jacobins de Colmar*, p. 430.

²¹⁴ In thermidor *an VII*, Marseille's *Réunion politique* paraded Marat's bust through the streets while dragging Barras' in the gutter. A. Aulard, ed. *Paris pendant la réaction thermidorienne*, vol. v, p. 666.

²¹⁵ In Évreux, for example, Marat's bust was smashed the moment word of his depantheonisation arrived. N. Rogue, *Souvenirs et Journal d'un bourgeois d'Évreux, 1740-1830*, (Évreux, 1850), p. 92.

was probably a bit of both.²¹⁶ What is certain is that Littry's 'fanatiques' reserved their greatest scorn for the club's bust of Marat. 'Brisé et foulé aux pieds', it bore the full brunt of the Norman peasantry's hatred of the Montagnard régime that had closed their churches, conscripted their sons and commandeered their crops.²¹⁷ Arles' stubborn attachment to Marat's memory and Littry's impulsive iconoclasm were both exceptionally reckless gestures of defiance, but it is precisely because they were so out of step with the prevailing orthodoxy that they deserve credit for the courage of their convictions if nothing else. Elsewhere, the busts and the processions were so many token gestures. As the more perceptive Montagnards realised only too well, the desire to appease, flatter, or simply hoodwink a visiting *représentant*, the need to mollify a detachment of armed *révolutionnaires* and the urge to create the right impression in the capital had made any number of 'gens devenus inopinément amis de Marat.'²¹⁸ Of course, the same could be said, and was, of many a Parisian who had

chargé sa cheminée des bustes de Marat et de Lepelletier..., a tapissé ses murs de leurs images, placées dans des beaux cadres où étaient ci-devant et où sont peut-être encore ci-dessous, Capet et sa femme...

but in Paris at least, genuine devotion and bare-faced duplicity existed side by side.²¹⁹ Trooping through the streets of their hometowns, brandishing their newly acquired busts and mouthing the words that were expected of them, most provincial Jacobins were just going through the motions. In the final analysis, commemoration was no longer a matter of sympathy; it had become a question of survival.

Four years later, when Marat's name had become a by-word for the excesses of the Terror, La Revellière-Lépeaux looked back in disgust on the 'hideuse saleté et

²¹⁶ The arrest of the *hébertistes* gave rise to 'bruits' throughout Paris and the surrounding countryside that Marat was about to be discredited as well and that his bust would soon be 'jeté par les fenêtres.' Caron, *Paris pendant la Terreur*, vol. vi, p. 63. For the subsistence crisis and requisitioning around Bayeux that preceded Littry's riot, see Hufton, *Bayeux*, pp. 222-3.

²¹⁷ Frémanger's report on the riot attributed the disturbance to the malevolent influence of the clergy on the local 'imbéciles' and 'bigotes'. Aulard, *C. S. P.*, vol. xii, p. 356. Similar scenes took place near Auxerre the following frimaire when another crowd of 'fanatiques' reclaimed the parish church of Migé and replaced Marat's bust with the saints' statues that had formerly been there. H. Forestier, 'Les Campagnes de l'Auxerrois et la dechristianisation d'après la correspondance d'Edme-Antoine Rathier, agent national du district d'Auxerre', *Annales de Bourgogne*, vol. xix, (1947) pp. 185-206, p. 196.

²¹⁸ This was Maure's sarcastic description of the *club de l'Hôpital*. Aulard, *C. S. P.*, vol. vii, pp. 174.

²¹⁹ *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 217, 18 frimaire an II, p. 282.

horrible confusion' of the 'éternelles processions maratistes'.²²⁰ Those scornful adjectives probably reveal as much about what remained of Republican *fraternité* in the year VI as they do about the meaning of memory in the year II. And yet, for all the Directorial disdain that accompanied his assessment, La Revellière-Lépeaux was essentially right: confusion was the defining feature of the 'éternelles processions maratistes.' Politically, this confusion was implicit in the factionalism that had engulfed Marat's memory in a welter of competing, even contradictory, definitions of what the Republic should be. From the very first, the commemoration of the *ami du peuple* had been characterised by conflicting voices, each one claiming the right to speak in his name, each one seeking to enlist 'l'ombre de Marat' to serve their own particular agenda. In Paris, the politics of Marat's memory embodied the uncertainty of a Revolution caught between 'l'exagération en moustaches' and 'le modérantisme en deuil,' but in the provinces, a somewhat different type of confusion prevailed.²²¹ It was just as scheming, just as self-serving, as in the capital, but it bore the imprint of Terror more openly. In its most conspicuous form, in Bordeaux's, Bourg's or Le Puy's desperate scramble to obtain absolution with a plaster bust or a parade, commemoration was a charade, an exaggerated act of contrition for the sins of federalism or fanaticism. Elsewhere, in towns that had less grievous faults to atone for, buying a bust of Marat one year only to shatter it the next was testimony to the overwhelming need to conform that suffocated provincial politics throughout the Terror. For all but a militant minority, these rites signified no real attachment to the Montagne, still less any admiration for Marat, just the affectation of an enthusiasm that few really shared any more. That the self-styled *sans-culottes* of Poligny could even imagine that the name of Simonneau, the 'infâme accapareur' of Étampes, still belonged alongside 'les noms sacrés' of Marat and Lepeletier, this was confusion indeed.²²²

²²⁰ L.-M. La Revellière-Lépeaux, *Essai sur les moyens de faire participer l'universalité des spectateurs à tout ce qui pratique dans les fêtes...*, (Paris, an VI) B. L. F.1061, no. 13, p. 7.

²²¹ The phrase is Desmoulin's. *Le Vieux Cordelier*, no. iii, 25 frimaire an II, p. 58.

²²² *Adresse des sans-culottes composant la Société Montagnarde et Républicaine de Poligny... le 10 nivôse, an II*, A. N. F/1c1/84, no. 1961. By this time, Simonneau had been thoroughly discredited in radical circles where the mere mention of his name was considered a 'mot de ralliement feuillant.' For Marat's earlier description of Simonneau and Collot's comments on the Lyonnais' admiration for him in frimaire, see *L'Ami du Peuple*, no. 630, 15 April 1792, p. 1 and Aulard, *C. S. P.* vol. viii, p. 668.

Old habits died hard in Poligny, but they proved just as resilient in the mind of the ordinary *révolutionnaire*, and this is where La Revellière's 'horrible confusion' was most keenly felt. Confusion was, of course, endemic in brumaire and frimaire *an II*. It was writ large in the 'peu des régulières' governing the new Revolutionary cults and all too obvious from the behaviour of the *citoyennes* who still blessed themselves upon entering the temples of Reason that had so recently been parish churches.²²³ For all the terse simplicity of Fouché's dechristianising decrees or the pathetic finality of so many clerical abdications, these were bewildering months, months when the chaotic tempo of political and religious change vastly exceeded most people's capacity, or desire, to keep pace with events. If the purpose of the iconoclasts' *auto-da-fés* was only too brutally clear, few *révolutionnaires* had any real sense of what should take the place of the statues and crucifixes they left smouldering in so many town squares. The goddesses of Reason, or Liberty, or the Supreme Being, and the nomenclature varied alarmingly from place to place, offered no real guide, because no one, not even the dechristianisers themselves, was entirely sure what these apparently interchangeable deities were supposed to represent. The fact that the militants frequently sought refuge in the makeshift mimicry of a *sans-culotte* sign of the cross: 'au nom de Marat, Lepeletier, la liberté ou la mort', or the questionable clarity of comparisons between the inefficacy of the 'vieux saints' and the muscular *civisme* of 'les nôtres' only added to the uncertainty that enveloped these strange new rites.²²⁴ The cries of 'nous ne voulons ni la loi d'Hérode ni celle des juifs, nous voulons la religion' that cut short a commemoration in Artonne's temple of Reason in January 1794 are perhaps an extreme example of the incomprehension (and the outrage) the new cults gave rise to, but they are revealing nevertheless.²²⁵ Even for those who did not reject it outright, dechristianisation was a deeply disorientating experience.

²²³ For Romme's criticism of the chaos that characterised the festivals of Reason, *A. P.* vol. 83, p. 441. Citizen Ciseau's attempts to excuse his wife's peculiar behaviour in Rouen are recounted in Chardon, ed. *Cahiers des Procès-Verbaux*, p. 177.

²²⁴ The especially composed *Hymne aux Grands Hommes* performed during Tours' *Fête de la Raison* in frimaire is typical of this type of comparison. Even in repudiating the old hagiography in favour of the new Revolutionary pantheon, an analogy of a sort was still being made:

Des vieux saints nous ne voulons plus - Ces saints ne valent pas les nôtres,
Marat, Pelletier et Brutus - Voilà nos vrais apôtres.

Fête de l'ouverture du temple de la Raison, célébrée à Tours, le décadi, 20 frimaire de l'an II, (Tours, an II) B. N. Lb41/3578, pp. 18-9. For the *sans-culotte* sign of the cross, see the examples cited in H. Grégoire, *Mémoires de Grégoire*, H. Carnot. ed. 2 vols. (Paris, 1840) vol. i, p. 341 and M. Dommanget, 'La Déchristianisation à Beauvais', *Annales Révolutionnaires*, vol. xii, (1920) pp. 445-70, p. 464.

²²⁵ For the *société populaire*'s report on the riot that interrupted their celebration of the recapture of Toulon, see Martin, *Les Jacobins au village*, pp. 109-12.

In many ways, the commemoration of Marat's memory was a reflection of this more general malaise. He was, after all, one of these new 'saints' and his place in the *sans-culottes'* celestial hierarchy was just as indeterminate as that of all the other 'divinités' that were unveiled before the public that winter.²²⁶ And yet, the 'horrible confusion' of the 'éternelles processions maratistes' was more than just an offshoot of the chaos dechristianisation unleashed in 1793. Rather, it was simply the latest, most jarring, expression of the 'monstreuse... mélange d'idées étrangères', the intolerable 'incohérence', that Quatremère had promised to eradicate two years earlier.²²⁷ By brumaire *an II*, 'tout ce qui pouvait rappeler les anciennes idées' had indeed been purged from the Panthéon, but ritually and rhetorically, the conflation of secular tribute and a sense of the sacred, the fundamental 'incohérence' at the heart of Revolutionary remembrance, remained. It was the 'incohérence' that renounced all the paraphernalia of 'superstition', but was unwilling, or perhaps simply unable, to imagine a new vocabulary with which to express its respect for the dead; the 'incohérence' that invoked Marat's intercession from beyond the grave in one breath:

Marat, du fonds de ta tombe ensanglanté. Entends les cris douloureux de tes concitoyens, ils te redemandent encore... O Marat, veilles encore sur les destins de ton pays...

only to insist that devotion to his memory should not go 'au-delà du terme fixé par la raison' the next.²²⁸ It was, ultimately, the same 'incohérence' that gleefully wrenched crosses from altars and steeples, but left those in graveyards intact because 'la vénération pour les morts a paru exiger cette tolérance.'²²⁹

Saint's statues are easily smashed, church silver easily melted down, but long-held beliefs and implicit assumptions are less susceptible to the hammer and the flames,

²²⁶ For Roux-Fazillac's insistence in late brumaire that 'Marat et Le Peletier soient désormais les saints que nous évoquerons', see Aulard, *C. S. P.* vol. viii, p. 406. While Marat was rarely ranked alongside the Goddess of Reason, he was occasionally granted titular divine status, as, for example, in Arles where Lardeyrol insisted that 'nous ne devons avoir pour divinité que Marat.' Cited in Vovelle, *La Révolution contre l'église*, (Paris, 1988) p. 178.

²²⁷ Quatremère, *Rapport sur l'édifice dit de Sainte-Geneviève...*, (1791) p. 24.

²²⁸ L.-M. Lulier, *Discours prononcé par le citoyen Lulier, procureur général syndic du Département de Paris, 1er décade, frimaire, dans l'Assemblée générale de la section Bon-Conseil, à la suite de l'apothéose des bustes de Marat et de Lepelletier*, (Paris, 1793) B. N. Lb40/1731, pp. 6 and 12.

²²⁹ This reluctance to interfere with crosses in cemeteries was widespread. Returning to Paris in 1795, Heinrich Meister observed that while crosses had been removed from church towers all along his route from Nancy, those in graveyards had generally been spared. A. N. F1 CIII, Haut-Rhin 6, quoted in Ozouf, *La Fête Révolutionnaire*, p. 377, and H. Meister, *Souvenirs de mon dernier voyage à Paris, 1795*, (Paris, 1910 ed.) p. 56.

especially when they touch on so sensitive a subject as the remembrance of the dead. For the *révolutionnaires* who packed Paris's squares and deconsecrated churches to pay their respects to their 'immortel ami', for the *républicaines* who knelt before his grave in the Cordeliers, commemoration was more than just a political ploy. It remained a moral obligation: a responsibility prescribed by a community's sense of respect for a dead *ami* and a duty defined by the diffuse spirituality that continued to shape popular attitudes towards death and the afterlife. Much had undoubtedly changed in the Revolution's rites of memory, but for these *révolutionnaires*, and for the Montagnards who felt compelled to warn them 'point d'enthousiasme et surtout point d'idole', something of 'les anciennes idées' clearly lingered on.²³⁰

²³⁰ Lulier, *Discours...*, p. 6.

Chapter VI

Nos Braves Défenseurs

As evening fell on 9 thermidor, Billaud-Varenne informed an exhausted Convention that:

Il n'y a pas de doute que la fête projetée pour demain était une mesure prise pour envelopper la Convention et les Comités, sous prétexte de faire manœuvrer devant la Convention les jeunes gens du camp.¹

After a day of increasingly frenzied denunciations, this last charge was hardly decisive. Robespierre's fate had been sealed well before Billaud made this last, very questionable claim, but even so, the suggestion that the pantheonisation of Bara and Viala had been planned as a pretext for another purge was still a useful addition to the list of charges against the 'nouveau Cromwell'. In a Convention where the Festival of the Supreme Being had already given rise to unease about the Incorruptible's intentions, the prospect of another parade, complete with armed cadets and cannon outside the Panthéon, was easily made to assume a more sinister aspect and Collot, Tallien and Fréron all incorporated Billaud's accusation into their attacks on their erstwhile colleague.² From the costumes that distinguished the deputies from the parade's other participants to the decision to hold the festival as night fell, every last detail of the planned procession was made to imply the existence of a vast conspiracy to massacre the Convention and install Robespierre on the throne. With the festival's

¹ A. M. no. 312, 12 thermidor an II, p. 341.

² Ibid.

master of ceremonies, David, conveniently absent, nobody cared to mention that none of these provisions was particularly unique. Armed men had been a constant presence in the ceremonial life of the capital throughout the Terror and many a parade had proceeded by torchlight in the past, but on 9 thermidor, every aspect of David's programme appeared to endorse Collot's ominous 'Nous ne savons pas ce que serait arrivé à la fête du demain.'³ It goes without saying that there was no proof for any of these claims, but ever since prairial, proof had been something the *conventionnels* could do without. Moral certainty was all that was required in the summer of *an II*, and Robespierre went to his death at least partly because a frightened Convention was certain that commemoration could be conceived solely to camouflage a *coup d'état*.

As a measure of the mounting paranoia that marked the last few months of the Terror, this episode merits little more than a mention in the history of Robespierre's downfall. As an insight into the politics of Revolutionary memory in *an II*, however, the fact that this claim could have been made, and more tellingly, that it could have seemed credible seems as good a guide as any to what the commemoration of the Revolution's dead had come to mean by the summer of 1794. After a year in which the Committees had repeatedly accused their opponents of abusing Marat's memory to sustain their own suspect agendas and missions during which many deputies had acquired first-hand experience of the clubs' commemorative 'grimaces', it was only too easy to imagine that all the pageantry might be merely a ploy, a subterfuge designed to conceal conspiratorial intent. There is even, perhaps, a sense of poetic justice in the fact that Robespierre and Saint-Just should have been denounced in these terms. They had been quite content to accuse the *enragés* and *hébertistes* of misusing Marat's memory in the past, and in thermidor a similar charge came back to damn both of them.⁴ Having listened to so many identical accusations over the previous year, the *conventionnels* were more than willing to credit Billaud's claims, and more importantly, so was the public they represented.⁵ They had heard, and

³ A. M. no. 312, 12 thermidor an II, p. 338.

⁴ The accusation that 'ces hypocrites, [avaient] parler sans cesse de Marat de Chalier; ils n'aimaient ni Marat ni Chalier' ranked high among the charges Collot levelled against his former colleagues. Ibid.

⁵ The deputies took the matter seriously enough to dispatch a delegation to ensure the loyalty of the cadets stationed at the *École de Mars*, while Billaud's accusation was widely repeated in the press following the coup. See, for example, Charles Duval's claim that Robespierre had planned to 'ensanglanter' the ceremony 'par l'égorgeement de tous ceux qui... se dévouent à la patrie.' Ibid. and *Journal des Hommes Libres*, 13 thermidor an II, reprinted in Aulard, *Paris pendant la réaction*, p. 4.

accepted, the same charges over the course of the year and they too had commemorated at convenience's command. They had seen Marat's bust paraded and heard Chalier's last words repeated in order to conceal suspect pasts and retrieve tarnished reputations, and they knew only too well that remembrance could be little more than a ruse. The Revolution, as one disheartened radical had complained a few months before, had become a 'bal de masque', and the commemoration of the Revolution's dead was merely one among many disguises.⁶

At different times in *an II*, celebrating Marat or Chalier had been the expedient thing to do. By turns, these rites had been scheming and self-serving. Sometimes, but only sometimes, they had been sincere, but as often as not, they had been, to use Billaud's term, a 'prétexte', an excuse for something else. As if to illustrate the cynicism that characterised so many of these ceremonies, the deputies, having so recently voted to confer 'les honneurs de l'immortalité' upon Bara and Viala, promptly forgot about the two teenagers once the tumult of Thermidor had died down.⁷ An unspoken sort of guilt by association quietly enveloped Robespierre's young heroes and what had initially been described as merely a postponement of their pantheonisation quickly became permanent. Almost a century would pass before another Republic decided to rehabilitate the boys' memory to ready its own youth for *la revanche*, but after Thermidor, Bara and Viala were hastily cast aside along with the rest of the *robesspierriste* past.⁸ And yet, while the Thermidorians disowned Robespierre's adolescent martyrs, they did not abandon the commemoration of the Revolution's dead. For all the renunciations of 'idolâtrie individuelle' that followed Robespierre's fall, for all the deputies' insistence that 'le passé n'est plus à nous... il appartient à la postérité', and the Thermidorians never seem to have tired of repeating this mantra, neither the *conventionnels* nor their successors in the Councils could turn their backs

⁶ *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 217, 18 frimaire an II, p. 282.

⁷ 'Rapport sur la fête héroïque, pour les honneurs du Panthéon à décerner aux jeunes Bara et Viala', in David, *Documents Complémentaires*, p. 110.

⁸ By the summer of 1795, it had even become possible to cast doubt on their existence, as in thermidor year III, when Courtois dismissed Viala as 'le héros fabuleux de la Durance.' E.-B. Courtois, *Rapport fait au nom des Comités de salut public et de sûreté générale sur les événements du 9 thermidor an II, précédé d'une préface en réponse aux détracteurs de cette mémorable journée, prononcé le 8 thermidor an III...*, (Paris, an III) p. 33. On the resurrection of Bara's memory during the Third Republic, see F. Wartelle, 'Bara, Viala, le thème de l'enfance héroïque dans les manuels scolaires de la IIIe République', *A. h.R. f.*, vol. 52, (1980) pp. 365-89.

on commemoration.⁹ For both the Thermidorian régime and the Directory, and as Lefebvre remarked: 'c'est tout un: mêmes hommes, mêmes fins, mêmes moyens', there was too much political capital to be made from the memory of the dead for that, particularly when there were so many dead to remember and so many scores to settle.¹⁰

The commemoration continued after Thermidor. Indeed, the pace of commemoration even accelerated that autumn as the Convention ushered in the new era with a sequence of three great ceremonies honouring three very different types of hero. This sequence began on the last day of the year II when Marat finally took his place in the Panthéon and continued three weeks later when Rousseau joined him there. Finally, on the last day of vendémiaire year III, this sudden spate of ceremonial came to a close when a small, rather uninspiring, urn was unveiled in the *Jardin National* in memory of the men who had died 'en défendant la patrie.'¹¹ The commemoration continued, but the nature of commemoration, and the men it honoured, also changed after Thermidor. By examining these three ceremonies and the controversies they gave rise to within both the Convention and the Councils, this chapter will chart the nature of this change, a change that can best be summed up as the steady militarization of Revolutionary remembrance. Like every other aspect of Revolutionary political culture after the Terror, the Revolution's rites of memory came to be dominated by the army in the closing years of the Republic. Numerous historians, Mathiez, Leith, Jourdan, and most recently, Livesey, have described the succession of military funerals that punctuated these years and outlined the plans for cenotaphs and triumphal arches that dominated the Directory's designs for the civic

⁹ Etienne Barry's self-serving repudiation of political idolatry was simply an echo of the advice: 'ne nous en faisons point d'idoles' that had begun to appear in the press immediately after Thermidor. E. Barry, *Discours sur les dangers de l'idolâtrie individuelle dans une république: prononcé dans le temple de la morale de la section de Guillaume Tell, le 20 fructidor, l'an 2e*, (Paris, an II) and *Le sans-culotte*, 12 thermidor, in Aulard, *Paris pendant la réaction*, vol. i, p. 6. Lindet's advice was echoed by an unlikely source in brumaire, when Tallien insisted that: 'les hommes ne doivent pas regarder derrière eux' while Thibaudeau was just as adamant that 'en Révolution, il fallait... ne plus regarder derrière soi'. Lindet, *Rapport fait à la Convention Nationale dans la séance du 4^e des Sans-culottides de l'an II au nom des Comités... réunis sur la situation intérieure de la République Française*, (Paris, an II), reprinted in Buchez and Roux, *Histoire Parlementaire de la Révolution française*, vol. 36, p. 95. For Tallien, see A. M. no. 34, 4 brumaire an III, p. 305, and Thibaudeau, *Mémoires*, vol. ii, p. 10.

¹⁰ G. Lefebvre, *La Révolution française*, (Paris, 1963 ed.) p. 465.

¹¹ Chénier, *Rapport sur la fête des Victoires qui doit être célébrée le décadi 30 vendémiaire l'an III... fait à la Convention Nationale... le 27 vendémiaire....*, (Paris, an III) p. 6.

space, and it would be pointless to go over this material in any detail here.¹² Rather, this chapter will ask why the régime that emerged from the ashes of the Terror gradually abandoned the politicians and *philosophes* who had dominated Revolutionary remembrance since 1789 and turned instead to the commemoration of its soldiers, and more specifically, its generals, to furnish the moral and political authority that these icons had once imparted. However, in examining why this process took place, this chapter will also explore what the frequently repeated promise that the Revolution honoured the memory of ‘nos braves défenseurs’ actually amounted to in practice. With a handful of ephemeral exceptions, the first Republic raised none of the *monuments aux morts* that appeared after the next great holocaust of French youth in 1918, and the state funerals in honour of Generals Hoche and Joubert in *an VI* and *VIII*, while undoubtedly spectacular, were by their very nature, short-lived experiences. A single afternoon’s solemnity, like a cenotaph that is never built, cannot really measure what the memory of half a million dead represented to those most directly affected by the war.¹³ Therefore, by looking beyond these ephemeral expressions of respect to the more mundane matter of state pension policy, this chapter will attempt to assess what the militarisation of Revolutionary memory meant to the widows and orphans the war left behind.

The year II had begun with a flood of festivals in memory of Marat, and it ended with one last parade in his honour. The day after Robert Lindet urged the Convention to turn its back on the past and look only to the future, and with pamphlets denouncing ‘les dangers de l’idolâtrie individuelle’ still appearing all over Paris, Marat finally took his place in the Panthéon.¹⁴ After almost a year’s delay, the apotheosis of the *ami du peuple* was, by all accounts, a rather apologetic affair. More a salute to the soldiers, veterans and *orphelins des défenseurs* who composed the bulk of the cortège

¹² For these festivals and monuments, see, in particular, A. Jourdan, *Les Monuments de la Révolution 1770-1804: Une Histoire de la Représentation*, (Paris, 1997), J. A. Leith, *Space and Revolution: Projects for Monuments, Squares and Public Buildings in France 1789-1799*, (Montreal, 1991) J. Livesey, *Making Democracy in the French Revolution*, (Cambridge, Mass., 2001) and A. Mathiez *La Théophilanthropie et le Culte Décadaire: Essai sur l’Histoire Religieuse de la Révolution*, (Geneva, 1975 ed.)

¹³ For the best estimate of casualty figures for the Revolutionary wars, see A. Corvisier, ‘La mort du soldat depuis la fin du Moyen Age’, *Revue historique*, no. 515, (1975) pp. 3-30, p. 16.

¹⁴ Lindet, *Rapport...*, and Barry, *Discours sur les dangers de l’idolâtrie individuelle...*, (Paris, an II)

than a celebration of a career in radical politics, the procession displayed none of the self-confident *sans-culottisme* of the previous autumn, and the speeches that accompanied it were hardly any more assured.¹⁵ Beyond a few references to his honourable 'indigence' and ill-defined 'amour' for the people, little was said about Marat, and there was very pointedly no mention of 1793's 'martyr de la liberté'.¹⁶ Even the ceremony's climax, if that is the right word for this very anticlimactic occasion, Marat's entry into the Panthéon, had to wait until after Mirabeau's corpse had been bundled out the back door in execution of a long-deferred decree.¹⁷

With its martial music and presentation of trophies to the troops, the *Fête des Récompenses*, and even that name seemed over-anxious to obscure the object of the day's events, had very little to do with Marat.¹⁸ As a token of what Doyle has described as 'the Convention's continuing commitment to radicalism', it seems an equally unconvincing spectacle, but then, this was not really the point of the parade on the 5th *sans-culottide*.¹⁹ Its purpose was far more defensive than that, because while Marat's pantheonisation may have been intended to serve this function when it was first decided on in mid-fructidor, this initial objective was rapidly overtaken by events. By the time the parade actually took place, a week after an alleged assassination attempt on Tallien had restored the reaction's momentum, the left was in full flight and a 'continuing commitment to radicalism' was the last thing on the deputies' minds. As a result, this long-postponed pantheonisation ended up being little more than an attempt by a beleaguered Montagnard minority, so recently ridiculed as *la queue de Robespierre*, to salvage what remained of its reputation by

¹⁵ For the overwhelmingly martial composition of the parade and the presentation of ensigns to the armies that opened the day's events, see Bourdon, 'Rapport fait au nom du Comité d'Instruction Publique sur la fête de la Cinquième Sans-Culottide', A. M. no. 363, 3e sans-culottide an II, p. 777.

¹⁶ Bourdon, *Rapport*, p. 777. For a sample of the speeches during the ceremony, see A. M. no. 4, 4 vendémiaire an III, and Désormaux's insipid *Aperçu du discours improvisé par le Vice-Président de la section du Panthéon Français, le quintidi sans-culottide*, (Paris, an III) B. H. V. P. 12,273, no. 7.

¹⁷ The previous frimaire, the Convention had decided that Marat's entry into the Panthéon should coincide with Mirabeau's expulsion. A. M. no. 67, 7 frimaire an II, p. 515.

¹⁸ According to the published programme, this was the official title of the parade. *Fête sans-culottide* [sic] *des récompenses*, (Paris, an II) B. N. Lb41/4056.

¹⁹ Ozouf argues a similar line, suggesting that the ceremony was meant to demonstrate 'la continuité révolutionnaire.' W. Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*, (Oxford, 1989) p. 283, and M. Ozouf, 'Thermidor ou la travail de l'oubli' in Ozouf, *L'École de la France: essais sur la Révolution, l'Utopie et l'Enseignement*, (Paris, 1984) p. 94.

denouncing the 'complots' and the jealousy that had delayed this day for so long.²⁰ These plots, it need hardly be said, were all ascribed to Robespierre, but however much the Montagne tried to take the edge off the reaction with this ritualised renunciation of *robessierrisme*, it was difficult to disguise the fact that Marat's pantheonisation was, just two weeks after it had been first proposed, already an anachronism.²¹ In a last-minute attempt to camouflage the incongruity of the occasion, the left tried to latch onto the public's renewed preoccupation with due process by depicting the festival as a belated act of 'justice nationale', but this was not the type of justice most people wanted after the Terror.²² With the prisons rapidly emptying and the trial of the Nantes federalists just beginning to put the conduct of Carrier's 'compagnie Marat' in the dock, justice would take a quite different course over the coming months, leaving radicals such as René Lebois to reflect on the bitter irony of honouring Marat when *le maratisme* was 'en exécration'.²³ If many agreed with Lebois' verdict, few shared his regrets, and fewer still turned out to watch this untimely triumph. The streets were almost empty as the parade passed by, and while the Jacobins tried to salvage what they could from the wreckage of the day, it was clear that this ill-considered exercise in damage limitation had been a disaster.²⁴ By the end of *an II*, the swaggering *sans-culottisme* of the previous summer was a thing of the past and the apotheosis of the *ami du peuple* merely a requiem for the Terror on the part of a dispirited Montagnard rump.²⁵

The *Fête des Récompenses* marks a dismal end to the Revolution's most sustained explosion of commemorative activity, but this 'triste' spectacle is more than simply a

²⁰ It hardly seems coincidental that the decision to hold the parade was taken just days after the publication of Méhée's *Le queue de Robespierre* and Lecointre's admittedly bungled attack on the surviving members of the ruling committees had placed the left very definitely on the defensive.

²¹ Bourdon's *Rapport* devoted much more attention to the 'complots de ceux qui ne l'aimaient pas, de ceux qui, envieux de sa gloire sans imiter ses vertus, voulaient arriver à son immortalité sur les débris de la liberté' than it did to Marat's virtues, and Bentabole made the same charge about Robespierre a few days before the festival. Bourdon, *Rapport*, op cit, and Guillaume, *C. I. P.* vol. v., p. 38.

²² For Bourdon's attempt to re-define the fête as an act of justice, see Bourdon, *Rapport*, p. 777.

²³ *L'Ami du Peuple*, no. 2, 20 September 1794, p. 2.

²⁴ The police reported that 'moins de monde, moins de gaieté, moins d'enthousiasme' had marked the day. Similarly, Guittard de Floriban recorded in his diary that the procession took no time at all to pass, so few were the participants, while in the Jacobins, Bourdon admitted that the attendance had been poor, although he tried to blame this on the pamphlets that pretended that the parade was merely a pretext for a massacre. A. N. AF II/139, no. 1089, *Journal d'un bourgeois de Paris*, p. 454, and *Journal de la Montagne*, no. 147, 3 vendémiaire an III, p. 1200.

²⁵ Writing to a friend a fortnight later, one Montagnard deputy sourly admitted that the day had been more like an 'enterrement' than a celebration. d'Yzez, 'Lettres d'un Conventionnel', p. 677.

measure of the confusion that characterised what Baczko has dubbed 'the Thermidorian moment'.²⁶ The weeks following Robespierre's fall were a time of intense instability, of chaos even, but in a political climate where Babeuf and Tallien could forge even the most fleeting of alliances and where Fréron could launch the reaction in Marat's name, this apotheosis was just one more anomaly in a very uncertain autumn.²⁷ Thermidor had made many strange bedfellows, but the anarchy of those autumn months soon resolved itself in the root-and-branch reaction that resulted in Marat's ignominious ejection from the Panthéon in pluviôse *an III*, although the significance of the *jeunesse dorée's* crusade to evict this 'vampire altéré de sang' from the Panthéon can easily be exaggerated.²⁸ The stream of pamphlets that appeared that winter demanding that the Panthéon be 'purifié' of Marat's presence and the wholesale destruction of his bust that began in late nivôse are certainly an eye-catching illustration of the reaction in full flow, but as Fréron for one was well aware, the right had more serious matters to attend to that winter.²⁹ The left was in disarray in early 1795, but with so many *terroristes* still at large, devoting so much time to razing the relics of the cult of Marat almost amounted to self-indulgence on the *muscadins'* part and Fréron urged his followers in early pluviôse:

ce n'est pas ainsi que le vrai citoyen travaille à sauver la patrie! Un soin plus pressant l'occupe... Laissons des morts avec leurs erreurs... et faisons le procès aux vivans.³⁰

The right had more pressing concerns than plaster busts in the winter of *an III*, and the same might be said of the *sans-culotterie*. While Lebois campaigned vigorously in Marat's defence, few followed his lead, and when the Convention finally caved in to *muscadin* pressure and decreed Marat's depantheonisation on the 20th of pluviôse there was little anyone could do but complain.³¹ Jean-Louis Degré, a carpenter from the *section l'Homme Armé*, was arrested for doing just that as he watched Marat's

²⁶ Ibid. and B. Baczko, *Comment sortir de la Terreur: Thermidor et Révolution*, (Paris, 1989)

²⁷ For Fréron's invocation of Marat as 'mon maître, mon éternel modèle', see *L'Orateur du Peuple*, no. i, 25 fructidor *an II*, pp. 3-4.

²⁸ For this unflattering description, see the anon. *Vie criminelle et politique de J.P. Marat, se disant ami du peuple...*, (Paris, *an III*) B. L. 645.a.43, no. 13, p. 3. For a more detailed discussion of the circumstances surrounding Marat's depantheonisation in pluviôse *an III*, see A. Mathiez, *La réaction thermidorienne*, (Paris, 1929) pp. 110-38, K. Tønnesson, *La Défaite des Sans-Culottes: Mouvement Populaire et Réaction Bourgeoise en l'an III*, (Oslo, 1959) pp. 117-48 and F. Gendron, *La Jeunesse Dorée: Épisodes de la Révolution Française*, (Quebec, 1979) pp. 90-109.

²⁹ Henriquez, *Le Dépantheonisation de J.-P. Marat, patron des hommes de sang et des terroristes...*, (Paris, *an III*) B. N. Lb41/4252, p. 12. For the first reports of the *jeunesse's* bust-smashing activities, see A. M. no. 118, 28 nivôse *an III*, p. 221.

³⁰ Fréron's call for restraint may have been partly tactical, but it still raised important issues about the reaction's political priorities. *L'Orateur du peuple*, no. 63, 1 pluviôse *an III*, p. 507.

³¹ Lebois, *Ami du Peuple*, np. 36, 19 pluviôse *an III*, p. 7.

cenotaph being torn down on the place du Carrousel, but otherwise, *l'ami du peuple* found few defenders in February 1795.³² Beyond the faubourgs where the few remaining *sociétés populaires* were unceremoniously shut down for parading Marat's bust in a last ditch stand against the reaction, the remnants of the popular movement accepted their idol's fall from grace with a docility born out of mounting despair.³³ Watching the symbols of *sans-culotte* supremacy being thrown in the gutters by mocking *muscadins* was doubtless galling, but in many respects, these humiliating scenes merely set the seal on a process that had been under way for at least a year. The popular movement had been decapitated long before the *jeunesse dorée* took the trouble to topple Marat's bust, and in any case, most Parisians had more important things to worry about than symbols in the bitter spring of *nonante-cinq*.

The 'morne et silencieuse' ceremony that delivered Marat to the Panthéon at the end of *an II* and its unseemly denouement five months later are revealing in many ways.³⁴ Taken together, they exemplify both the extent to which a politically 'hermaphrodite' Convention had lost control of events by February 1795 and the speed of the *sans-culotterie's* collapse after the Terror, although the 'moins de monde' that turned out for the pantheonisation in the first place possibly illustrates this much better than the latter episode.³⁵ Above all, however, Marat's pantheonisation illustrates the problems that dogged the Convention's recourse to remembrance after Thermidor, because while the deputies sought to use Marat's memory to distance themselves from the *robepierriste* past, they could neither control nor contain the public's desire for revenge upon that past, a past in which so many *conventionnels* were themselves implicated. The memory of the Terror, and the commemoration of its dead, as Ozouf suggests, confronted the Convention with an impossible dilemma after Thermidor.³⁶ It could either follow the course that Robert Lindet had outlined on the eve of Marat's pantheonisation and 'faisons oublier à nos concitoyens les malheurs inséparable d'une

³² For Degré's arrest, see R. Cobb and G. Rudé, 'Les journées de Germinal et de prairial an III', *Revue Historique*, (1955) pp. 250-81, p. 258.

³³ Following police reports of a planned march on the Convention to demand an end to the attacks on Marat's bust, the ruling committees took the opportunity to shut down the *société populaire de la section des Quinz-Vingts* and the *club de Lajouski*. A. M. no. 142, 22 pluviôse an III, pp. 415-6.

³⁴ *Le Courrier Républicain*, no. 364, 1 vendémiaire an III, p. 175.

³⁵ This unflattering, but also rather appropriate, description of the Convention in February 1795 is Mallet du Pan's. Mallet du Pan, *Correspondance inédite de Mallet du Pan avec la Cour de Vienne*, (Paris, 1884) p. 119, and A. N. AF II/139, no. 1089.

³⁶ Ozouf, 'Thermidor ou le travail de l'oubli'.

grande Révolution' or it could revel in the misfortunes of the past and risk opening the floodgates on a dangerously destabilising cycle of remembrance and retribution.³⁷ Despite the regularity with which the thermidorians echoed this call to put the past behind them, and even Tallien was not above insisting that 'les hommes ne doivent pas regarder derrière eux' when it suited him, Lindet's solution was, of course, unsustainable.³⁸ The dead were too many and the desire for vengeance too great, even among the deputies themselves, to ever construct a Republican *ralliement* around the collective amnesia that Lindet advocated and the renunciation of revenge that this implied.

The past could not be as easily forgotten as Lindet assumed. And yet, the alternative to his amnesiac advice, the indiscriminate commemoration of the Terror's victims, was almost equally unpalatable, because as Lindet had also reminded his colleagues: 'la Révolution est faite; elle est l'ouvrage de tous.'³⁹ Coming from a member of the Committee of Public Safety, this warning was certainly self-serving, but it also contained an inescapable truth, one that the left was only too willing to repeat throughout the year III. From Carrier's claim in frimaire that the whole Convention was responsible for the Terror, 'down to the President's bell' to Bentabole's indignant intervention in the debate on the reintegration of the expelled Girondins in ventôse, the deputies were constantly being reminded that 'vous avez tous participé à la terreur'.⁴⁰ No matter how loudly they protested their innocence, the *conventionnels* had been complicit, if only by their silence, in the working of the Terror, and because of this, commemorating all of its victims risked calling their own authority, and with it the entire Republican edifice, into question. Caught between their desire to make the memory of the dead indict the crimes, and the criminals, of the year II, and their own complicity in so many of those crimes, the *conventionnels* opted for a compromise between the extremes of wilful forgetting and wholesale remembrance, and embarked upon a policy of highly selective commemoration instead. Seeking salvation from the stigma of the *robesspierriste* past in the memory of their own martyrs, the *conventionnels* chose to commemorate the dead of *an II* chiefly from within their own ranks.

³⁷ Lindet, *Rapport fait à la Convention Nationale*, p. 95.

³⁸ A. M. no. 34, 4 brumaire an III, p. 305.

³⁹ Lindet, *Rapport*, p. 101.

⁴⁰ Doyle, *The Oxford history*, p. 285, and for Bentabole, A. M. no. 170, 20 ventôse an III, p. 639.

The deputies' 'incroyable' attempt to re-invent Marat as a victim of *robepierriste* injustice was only the first instance of this uneasy compromise, because as the reaction rapidly broadened out to embrace every aspect of the year II, so the *conventionnels* continued to commemorate their own kind, honouring first Féraud in prairial and then the Girondin dead the following vendémiaire.⁴¹ Admittedly, after the embarrassing *volte-face* that decreed Marat's depantheonisation in pluviôse *an III*, the deputies were forced to adopt a rather more cautious approach to the commemoration of their colleagues than before. To begin with, the dead had to be chosen more carefully before they could be made to stand as symbols of the suffering the Convention had endured until its emancipation from the 'tyrannie décemvirale'.⁴² By the winter of *an III*, it had become clear that Marat had been a particularly poor choice of icon for the new régime, but there were plenty of other deputies, particularly among the Girondins, whose deaths might be made to hold the *terroristes* to account and whose commemoration might confer some kind of absolution upon an embattled Convention. Similarly, things had to be done on a rather more modest scale after pluviôse *an III* than they had been before. With the Panthéon in a state of political quarantine after Marat's eviction and the city in turmoil throughout the year, the *conventionnels* were forced to retreat to their own *salle de séances* to commemorate their fallen colleagues, but while the setting for these ceremonies changed, their purpose remained essentially the same. Whether it was a question of remembering Marat as a means of repudiating Robespierre, or of commemorating Féraud in order to condemn the 'ivresse délirante et homicide' of the popular movement in prairial, or ultimately, of honouring the Girondin victims of 'dix-huit mois d'anarchie' so as to disavow the entire year II, the thermidorians used remembrance as a vehicle for retribution rather an expression of respect.⁴³

For all the eulogies and *cérémonies funèbres*, the dead were of little consequence in the thermidorian Convention. At best, they were simply a means to an end, and in the year III, that end was revenge. This might seem a cynical conclusion to draw, but it is

⁴¹ For Nicholas Ruault's typically Thermidorian incredulity, see Ruault, *Gazette d'un Parisien*, p. 375.

⁴² A. M. no. 170, 20 ventôse *an III*, p. 638.

⁴³ Chénier, *Rapport... par Marie-Joseph Chénier suivi de la loi, qui ordonne pour le 14 prairial une cérémonie funèbre en la mémoire du représentant du peuple, Ferraud*, (Paris, *an III*) p. 2, and Baudin, *Discours prononcé par Baudin... président de la Convention... à l'occasion de la fête funèbre célébrée en l'honneur des députés morts victimes de la tyrannie*, (Paris, *an IV*) B. L. F.1085, no. 6, p. 7.

difficult not to be cynical about a twenty-four page eulogy that scarcely mentions its subject while devoting page after unforgiving page to denouncing 'la déraison, l'imposture, la colère, l'impudeur' of the *sans-culotterie* and demanding the death penalty for their 'chefs coupables'.⁴⁴ However, if cynicism seems the only suitable response to Louvet's speech in memory of the murdered Jean Féraud, it seems even more appropriate in the light of the Convention's refusal to even entertain Jean Dusaulx's impassioned appeal for a monument in memory of the 'milliers de bons citoyens... [qui] ont été massacrés impitoyablement' during the Terror.⁴⁵ Dusaulx's memorial was designed to serve many purposes, some of them explicitly political, others less obviously so. By taking the place of the guillotine on the Place de la Révolution, it was meant to mark an end to the tyranny of the past and to serve as a rallying point for a 'société fatiguée des discordes renaissantes' of the present. And yet, while Dusaulx aimed to 'effacer, autant qu'il est en nous, les traces sanglants qui souillent le sol de la liberté', his proposal was far from being merely a monumental variation on Lindet's call to forget. Dusaulx's ambitions were more wide-ranging than this because while his memorial aspired to re-unite a fractured nation by 'anéantir' the memory of the *an II*, it also acknowledged that this could never be achieved by simply ignoring the dead. On the contrary, for Dusaulx, commemoration could help to heal the wounds left by the Terror, but only if it offered both consolation to the 'familles désolées' of the dead and 'une signe de clémence et d'expiation' to their 'égarés' oppressors. With one of its altars designed to express 'l'affliction et les regrets de la nation française' and the other extending 'la miséricorde' to the misguided followers of the Montagne, Dusaulx's memorial held out the prospect of both recognition for the bereaved and reconciliation for the nation as a whole.

Coming from one of the recently reinstated Girondin deputies, Dusaulx's plea for a place to mourn constituted a remarkably magnanimous call for conciliation through commemoration. It was also, however, remarkably mistimed. Dusaulx delivered his

⁴⁴ Beyond a few clichés concerning 'ce vrai patriote, cet excellent fils', Louvet's elegy had very little to say about Féraud, which is hardly surprising as he was generally considered a laughing stock by his colleagues. Louvet, *Discours prononcé par le représentant du peuple J. B. Louvet dans la séance du 14 prairial an III*, (Paris, an III) pp. 22 and 26. For Merlin de Thionville's description of Féraud as 'risée de toute l'armée', see Mathiez, *La réaction*, p. 247. For a description of the 'cérémonie funèbre' on the 14th of prairial, see the *Journal des Hommes Libres*, no. 1, 16 prairial an III, p. 2 and *Le Décade Philosophique*, no. 42, 30 prairial an III, p. 569.

⁴⁵ Dusaulx, *Discours prononcé à la Convention Nationale dans la séance du 17 germinal an III*, (Paris, an III) B. N. Le38/1330, p. 2.

appeal on the 17th of germinal, just days after the abortive uprising that had given the Convention the excuse it finally needed to dispatch 'les grands coupables' of the year II, Collot, Billaud, Barère and Vadier, off to the 'dry guillotine' and to incarcerate many of their radical allies. In the midst of these reprisals, Dusaulx's appeal was all but hopeless, and while his colleagues sullenly referred his scheme to the Committee of Public Instruction for further consideration, this was simply a convenient way of burying an exceptionally inopportune call for reconciliation.⁴⁶ The Convention had no time for clemency, and still less for the consolation Dusaulx called for in germinal year III, and while it could not allow the dead to be completely forgotten, and the macabre details of the *noyades* and the *mitrillades* were far too useful for that, it could not bring itself to commemorate them either.

Dusaulx's plans came to nothing, but if the Convention was in no mood to extend the 'miséricorde' that he proposed in germinal, the wider public was even less inclined to forgive and forget in the spring of *an III*. While the Convention sought redemption for the Terror in the memory of its own martyrs 'à la fureur des tyrans', a popular reaction that adopted the *Réveil du Peuple*'s promise that:

Oui, nous jurons sur votre tombe,
 Par notre pays malheureux
 De ne faire qu'une hécatombe
 De ces cannibales affreux

as its anthem could no more be satisfied by a few officious elegies in the Convention's *salle des séances* than it could have its thirst for revenge slaked by a handful of scapegoats like Carrier and Collot.⁴⁷ From the crowds that marched out to a field on the outskirts of Orange on All Saints Day 1794 to hear René Marchand, a farm labourer, recite the litanies of the saints in memory of the 332 victims of the *Commission populaire d'Orange* buried there to the cries of 'Je viens de venger la mort de mon père' that accompanied the White Terror throughout the Midi, the remembrance of the dead in provincial France took forms that could never be contained within the Convention's *salle des séances* or reconciled with the new

⁴⁶ The deputies' response to Dusaulx's suggestion was unenthusiastic at best, and while it was referred to the *Comité de l'Instruction Publique* for consideration, there is no trace of it ever having been discussed there. A. M. no. 200, 20 germinal an III, pp. 156-7 and Guillaume, *C. I. P.* vol. vi, p. 38.

⁴⁷ Baudin, *Discours prononcé par P. C. L. Baudin... président de la Convention Nationale... à l'occasion de la fête funèbre célébrée en l'honneur des députés morts victimes de la tyrannie*, (Paris, an IV) B. L. F.1085, no. 6, p. 1. For the *Réveil du peuple*, see Mathiez, *La Réaction*, p. 134.

régime's stated aim of restoring the rule of law.⁴⁸ Belatedly, the Convention realised this, and in the summer of 1795, the deputies that had been dispatched to restore order to the troubled towns of the south tried to redirect the public's desire for revenge with a handful of ceremonies 'en mémoire des victims du Terrorisme'.⁴⁹ These cautious commemorations, however, could do little to appease the residents of towns and cities that had suffered so much during the Terror. Lyon's experience seems exemplary in this respect. Few Lyonnais can have forgotten, or were allowed to forget by Pelzin's unforgiving *Journal de Lyon*, the Convention's promise to reduce their city to rubble, or the part that local Jacobins had played in turning the city into 'un vaste cimetière', and neither ceremonies nor cenotaphs could satisfy the city's need for revenge.⁵⁰ Just as Hyacinthe Richaud's hopelessly optimistic *fête de la Concorde* in pluviôse failed to assuage the 'haines et les vengeances' that racked the city in the spring of 1795, so Boisset and Debry's decision to raise a memorial to the city's dead on the site of the *mitrallades* in mid-May could not bring the killing to a close.⁵¹ Lyon's past, and the memory of nearly two thousand dead, was not as easily exorcised as this, and the killing continued throughout the summer of *an III* and on into the Directory.

Neither Richaud's ritual of reconciliation nor his successors' overdue attempts to restore calm by commemorating the dead could halt the city's slide into anarchy that summer, especially as local leaders like Sériziat were only too willing to use these ceremonies as a platform to demand the final 'destruction des brigands'.⁵² There

⁴⁸ For the several thousand strong crowd that converged on the mass grave at Orange, and the ensuing arrest of Marchand, see P. de la Gorce, *Histoire Religieuse de la Révolution Française*, (Paris, 1921 ed.) 5 vols. vol. iv, p. 18. For the motives inspiring the White Terror, see C. Lucas, 'Themes in southern violence after 9 thermidor', in Lewis and Lucas, eds. *Beyond the Terror*, pp. 152-94, p. 168.

⁴⁹ See, for example, Jean Debry's attempt to atone for his predecessor, Maignet's execution of sixty-three villagers in Bédoin with an 'urne funéraire' on the site of the atrocity in May 1795, and Joseph Bonet's attendance at Saint-Étienne's ceremony 'en mémoire des victims du Terrorisme' in June. A. M. no. 248, 8 prairial an III, p. 539 and *Procès-verbal de la fête funéraire qui a eu lieu à Saint-Étienne, le 3 messidor, 3e année républicaine, en mémoire des victims du Terrorisme...*, B. L. F. R. 371, no. 32.

⁵⁰ From its very first issue in February 1795, Pelzin's paper had maintained an unrelenting crusade for 'vengeance' in the name of 'le sang de vos aïeux.' *Journal de Lyon et du département de Rhône*, no. 1, 29 pluviôse an III, pp. 4 and 8. For the massacres' continuation into the summer, see the *Journal des Hommes Libres* no. 60, 15 thermidor an III, p. 239.

⁵¹ For Richaud's call for reconciliation, see the *Journal de Lyon*, no. 26 ventôse an III, pp. 10-19, and for the 'amère dérision' that greeted his efforts, see A. Guillon de Montléon, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la ville de Lyon pendant la Révolution*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1824) vol. iii, p. 200. For Debry's speech on the 10th of prairial, see the *Journal de Lyon*, no. 31 and 32, 13 prairial an III, p. 266, and for a description of the cenotaph at les Brotteaux, see F.-A. Delandine, *Tableau des Prisons de Lyons pour servir à l'histoire de la Tyrannie de 1792 et 1793*, (Lyon, 1797) pp. 319-23.

⁵² Sériziat, *Discours prononcé par le c. Sériziat, chef de légion à la fête funèbre célébrée à Lyon le 10 prairial pour honorer la mémoire des braves Lyonnaises immolés par le terrorisme*, (Lyon, an III) p. 2.

could be no reconciliation in Lyon, and while it was convenient for the Convention to pretend that these murders were part of a royalist conspiracy orchestrated by the shady *Compagnie de Jésus*, this was only part of the story.⁵³ The Counter-Revolution certainly flourished in Lyon after *an II*, but as Boisset, the representative who was present in the city as the bloodbath began in floréal, noted, the main motive for the massacres was personal revenge. Arriving outside the city's prisons as the slaughter subsided on the 15th, he was told by those responsible for the carnage that 'les monstres ont fait assassiner mon père, celui-ci a fait égorger mon frère, celui-la m'a privé de toute ma famille et la Convention se tait sur ces scélérats', and similar cries were heard throughout the south that summer.⁵⁴ The Counter-Revolution, at least as it was understood in the Convention, meant little to the crowds that descended on Lyon's prisons in floréal, and the nuances of Parisian politics were almost equally irrelevant across the rest of the Midi, where as Lucas suggests, the *égorgeur* 'parlait de vengeance plutôt du Roi.'⁵⁵

Between Lindet's insistence that the Convention should turn its back on the 'ruines que vous avez franchies' and think only of 'ce qui vous reste à faire' and Dusaulx's conviction that a consensus could be built around a cathartic act of commemoration, the Convention had chosen an unhappy, and ultimately untenable, compromise.⁵⁶ Unwilling to forego the opportunities for recrimination that remembrance might afford but also unable to honour the victims of laws they had themselves passed and missions they had performed, the *conventionnels* had sought refuge in the commemoration of their fallen colleagues, while ignoring the memory of the thousands of dead Dusaulx sought to honour. In the face of the Convention's indifference, the remembrance of these 'milliers' was left to their loved ones, for whom commemoration was, as Thibaudeau later recalled, a matter of 'pleurs secrets et des regrets silencieux'.⁵⁷ In a Midi, however, where 'the imperatives of commitment were ultimately biological rather than ideological' and where the

⁵³ For the Convention's attribution of the massacres to a royalist plot, see Chénier, *Rapport fait au nom des comités de salut public et de sûreté générale par Marie-Joseph Chénier, dans la séance du 6 messidor an III*, (Paris, an III) p. 3.

⁵⁴ Aulard, *C. S. P.* vol. xxii, pp. 712-4.

⁵⁵ C. Lucas, 'Violence thermidorienne et société traditionnelle: l'exemple du Forez', *Cahiers d'Histoire*, vol. xx, (1979) pp. 3-43, p. 15.

⁵⁶ Lindet, *Rapport*, p. 102.

⁵⁷ Thibaudeau, *Mémoires sur la Convention et le Directoire*, vol. i, p. 50.

tradition of the vendetta ran deep, tears and regrets could never suffice.⁵⁸ Here, the memory of the dead demanded more than mourning; it cried out for revenge, and as the massacres spread across the south, the contradiction at the heart of the thermidorians' language of remembrance and retribution was writ large in the blood of murdered *mathevons*. In a sense, the White Terror represented the logical conclusion of the *conventionnels*' attempts to use the memory of the dead to indict the living, but while some deputies certainly connived in the massacres, this was not a conclusion that a Convention committed to the rule of law could ever accept. The deputies' attempts to chart a course midway between Lindet's impossible amnesia and Dusaulx's all-embracing commemoration of the dead had failed, because in the year III, there could be no compromise. After the Terror, there could only be revenge.

For the survivors, and survival is possibly all that Thermidor's disparate coalition of crypto-royalists, reactionaries, and repentant radicals ever really had in common, remembrance in the year III had been a question of a political rather than a moral reckoning. From the ill-considered decision to send Marat to the Panthéon in fructidor and the equally unplanned exodus in pluviôse to the rather more calculating commemoration of Féraud and the Girondins, the desire for revenge, revenge on Robespierre, revenge on Marat, revenge, ultimately, on the entire year II, had dictated the Convention's commemorative endeavours from beginning to end. And yet, revenge, however satisfying it might be, is not a *raison d'être*. No régime can sustain itself solely on the settling of old scores, particularly when it aspires to embody *le retour au règne des lois*, and particularly when the recriminations can so easily get out of hand. For all their anxiety to use the memory of the dead of distance themselves from the recent past, the thermidorians needed another kind of icon as well, a symbol to represent the Republic's regeneration after the Terror, and to this end, they turned to Rousseau.

'Très peu du monde' had turned out for the apotheosis of the *ami du peuple*, but three weeks later, on 20 vendémiaire, 'un peuple innombrable' assembled on the streets of

⁵⁸ P. M. Jones, *Politics and Rural Society: the southern Massif Central, c. 1750-1880*, (Cambridge, 1985) p. 211.

Paris to escort Rousseau up the Mont Sainte-Geneviève.⁵⁹ It was the last stage of a journey that had begun three days before when a delegation of deputies arrived in Ermenonville to finally bring Rousseau's remains back to Paris. Accounts describe the sarcophagus placed on a cart garlanded with flowers, trundling along from village to village, greeted at each stop by an impromptu welcoming committee of 'spectateurs attendris'.⁶⁰ As a prelude to a pantheonisation, these 'témoignages les plus tendres de vénération et d'amour' were touching enough in themselves, but they paled in comparison to the scenes that greeted this cavalcade 'des campagnes' on its arrival in the capital.⁶¹ There, after an overnight stop on an imitation *fle des peupliers* in the Tuileries, Rousseau began his final journey on 20 vendémiaire. (See Figure 11) That afternoon's procession was a particularly poignant affair. Replacing the martial tunes and military trophies that had marked Marat's pantheonisation, the plaintive airs of the *Devin du Village* accompanied a convoy of carriages covered in fruit and flowers and carrying the tools of the trades that Rousseau had long championed through the city.⁶² (See Figure 12) It was, according to the deputy, Jean-Baptiste Marragon, 'vraiment la plus belle des fêtes et la mieux ordonnée', and his enthusiasm was echoed in the lengthy press reports that distinguished the Revolution's last pantheonisation from the awkward silence that had enveloped its immediate predecessor.⁶³ From the Jacobin *Journal des Hommes Libres* to the unashamedly right-wing *Courrier Républicain* and *Messenger du soir*, editors of all political hues lavished praise on the ostentatiously innocuous collection of musicians, botanists, and nursing mothers that ushered Rousseau's remains through the city.⁶⁴ (See Figure 12) A 'foule immense', it was generally agreed, had lined the route to the Panthéon, and 'une joie respectueuse' was imprinted on every face.⁶⁵ After the fiasco on the 5th *sans-culottide*, this was a festival the Convention could be proud of.

⁵⁹ A. N. AF IV/139, no. 1089, and *La Feuille Villageoise*, no. 5, 25 vendémiaire an III, p. 66.

⁶⁰ Although many newspapers covered the celebrations in the capital in exuberant detail, the *Feuille Villageoise* was the only one to provide a detailed description of the journey to Paris. *La Feuille Villageoise*, no. 5 25 vendémiaire an II, pp. 65-7.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² For the composition of the cortège that accompanied Rousseau's coffin from its temporary resting place in the Tuileries, see Lakanal, *Rapport sur J. J. Rousseau...*, pp. 12-4,

⁶³ B. H. V. P. ms. 733, fol. 259, letter of the 21st vendémiaire an III.

⁶⁴ For a selection of press comment on the festival, see Aulard, ed. *Paris pendant la réaction thermidorienne*, vol. i, pp. 158-67.

⁶⁵ *Journal des hommes libres*, 23 vendémiaire an III, reprinted in *ibid.*, and *La Feuille Villageoise*, no. 5, 25 vendémiaire an III, p. 66.

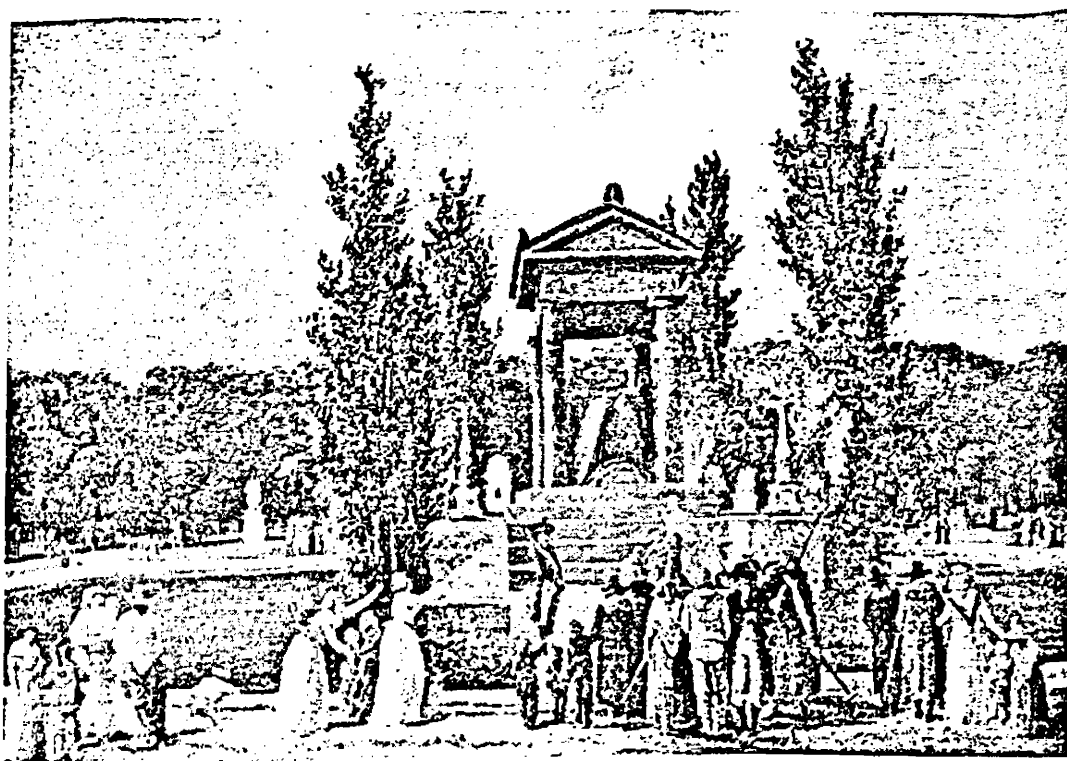


Figure 11. Hubert Robert, *L'Apothéose de Jean-Jacques Rousseau dans le jardin des Tuileries*, National Gallery of Ireland.

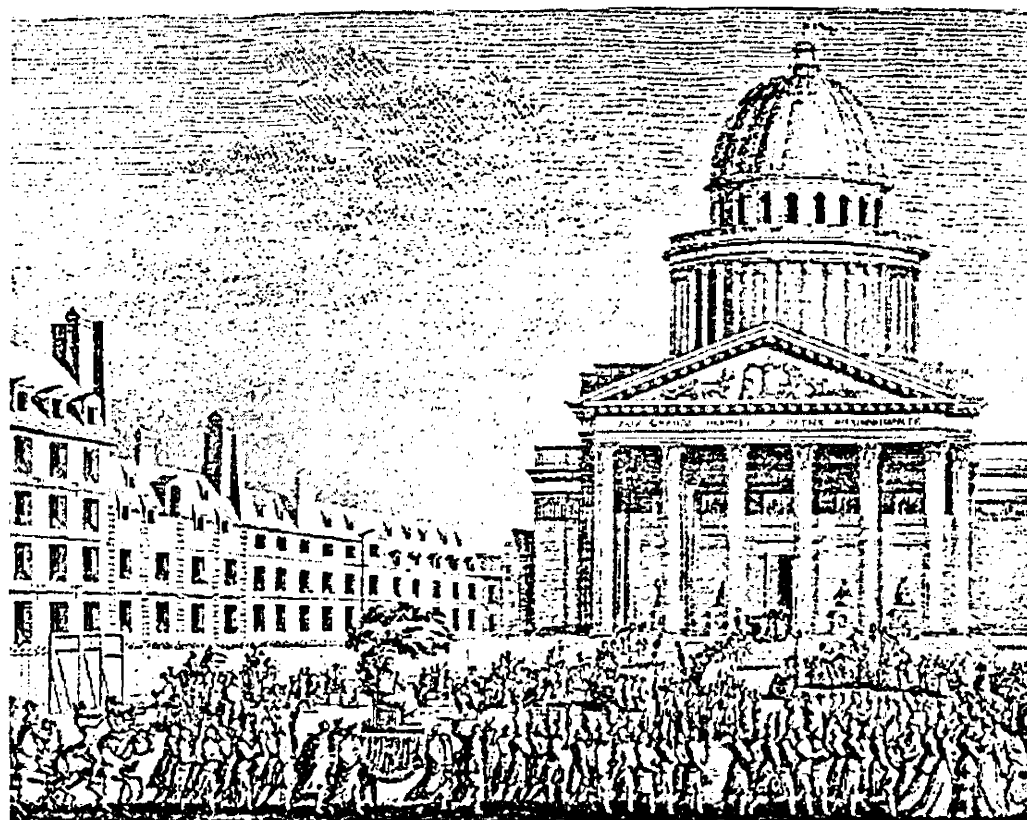


Figure 12, 'Apothéose de J. J. Rousseau, sa Translation au Panthéon, le 11 octobre 1794 ou 20 vendémiaire an 3eme de la République', Prieur, *Tableaux Historiques*, no. 108.

There was, as Ginguené gushed in the *Feuille Villageoise*, ‘quelque chose de magique’ about the occasion, and for once, the overstatement seems appropriate.⁶⁶ For all the *conventionnels*’ claims that Rousseau’s return to Paris was yet another ‘acte solennel de justice nationale’, the entire event was little more than a vast conjuring trick, a symbolic sleight of hand designed to make the memory of a more radical Republic disappear in a deluge of shrubbery and motherly love.⁶⁷ Less an acknowledgment of the Revolution’s debt to Rousseau than an attempt to reach back in time to a France before the Terror, every aspect of this ceremony was designed to summon up the image of an Arcadian past when the nation seemed at one in its admiration of ‘l’homme de la nature’. This agenda was evident from the moment the Convention first turned its attention to the National Assembly’s never-executed decree of September 1791. Denouncing, yet again, the ‘jalousie’ that had denied Jean-Jacques his place alongside Voltaire, Jean Debry had first raised the problem of this long-postponed pantheonisation in fructidor as a thinly veiled attack on Robespierre, and the Convention leapt at the opportunity to further distance itself from the Terrorist past.⁶⁸ Casting aside the scruples that had preserved the peace at Ermenonville for so long, the deputies adopted Debry’s proposal unanimously and referred it to the *Comité d’Instruction Publique* for immediate execution. Just as the Montagnards had sought to use Marat’s memory in order to pose as the righter of *robesspierriste* wrongs, so their more moderate colleagues in the Convention latched onto Rousseau’s remains as a means to a very similar end. Given Robespierre’s very public identification with Rousseau, this might have seemed a rather risky strategy to adopt, but ‘l’Ami de la Nature’ was too important an icon to abandon simply because Robespierre had always claimed a special affinity with Jean-Jacques, and by vendémiaire, he certainly seemed a more suitable symbol for the new dispensation than *l’ami du peuple*. Untainted by the Terror in a way that no politician could possibly be, Rousseau, and particularly the Rousseau who had

nous apprit à honorer le travail, la pauvreté, le malheur, à chercher dans l’humble atelier, ou dans la chaumière obscure, les vertus, les mœurs, la véritable dignité, comme le vrai bonheur

⁶⁶ *La Feuille Villageoise*, no. 5, 25 vendémiaire an III, p. 67.

⁶⁷ Lakanal, *Rapport sur J. J. Rousseau*, p. 2. Barère and Merlin de Thionville also described the fête in these terms. *A. M.* no. 362, 2e *sans-culottide* an II, p. 772.

⁶⁸ Following the arrival of a petition on fructidor 6th, Jean Debry explicitly attributed the failure to pantheonise Rousseau to Robespierre’s jealousy. *A. M.* no. 338, 8 fructidor an II, p. 574.

represented the one figure from the past who could command respect across a broad range of thermidorian opinion, and it was this particularly irreproachable Rousseau that the *conventionnels* chose to celebrate in *an III*.⁶⁹

Placing the ceremony's accent firmly on the less contentious elements of *Émile* and the utterly inoffensive *Devin du village*, Lakanal's programme for the parade was a paean to a Rousseau above faction, a fatherly figure who had preached the joys of parenthood and inspired a generation to embrace the countryside. Of course, revolutionaries of all political persuasions had held similar festivals in honour of Jean-Jacques in the past. In September 1791, for example, Rousseau's admirers in Montmorency had staged a 'fête champêtre' in his memory with an almost identical *mise en scène*, and a similar array of pastoral props had appeared during the unveiling of Rousseau's bust by the *Société fraternelle des patriotes des deux sexes* in Paris the following February.⁷⁰ It is probably even fair to say that the essential elements of Lakanal's floral tribute to 'l'Homme de la Nature' would not have looked particularly out of place during the *Fête de l'Être Suprême* the previous prairial. However, while the thermidorians' festivities drew on a well-established repertoire of sentimental tableaux and moralising slogans, the real significance of vendémiaire's ceremony lies less in what was included in Lakanal's *résumé* of Rousseau's life and work than in what was left out, and reworking Jean-Jacques for the year III required some very careful editing of the customary *rousseauiste* canon.

Rousseau's religious convictions were the first casualty of the Convention's desire to put the past, and more specifically, the Cult of the Supreme Being, behind it. While Lakanal's *Rapport* hailed Rousseau as the author of a 'révolution immense... dans nos mœurs', on closer inspection, this moral metamorphosis amounted to little more than teaching gentlemen to take up a trade and encouraging mothers to nurture their young.⁷¹ It certainly made no reference to the spiritual dimension of Rousseau's writings, and the acclaim for his impassioned advocacy of 'l'idée consolante de la Divinité' that had featured so prominently in earlier eulogies was entirely absent from

⁶⁹ Lakanal, *Rapport sur J. J. Rousseau*..., p. 4.

⁷⁰ For Montmorency's memorial, see the anon. *Fête Champêtre célébrée à Montmorency en l'honneur de J. J. Rousseau*..., (Paris, 1791) For the unveiling of the *Société fraternelle*'s bust, see the *Extrait du procès-verbal de la séance du Dimanche, 12 février 1792*, (Paris, 1792)

⁷¹ Lakanal, *Rapport sur J. J. Rousseau*..., pp. 6 and 8.

the celebrations in *an III*.⁷² Having presented his *Rapport* as an all-embracing analysis of Rousseau's rôle in the creation of Revolutionary culture, Lakanal's decision to ignore his highly influential religious writings was an extraordinary omission, but in the context of the political tensions that continued to plague the Convention after Thermidor, this oversight was essential as well. The thermidorians were far too deeply divided on the religious question to risk reopening the debate between deists and dechristianisers that had proved so decisive earlier that summer, and accordingly, the ceremony maintained a stony silence concerning Rousseau's religious ideas throughout.

In vendémiaire year III, the memory of Robespierre's Sermon on the Mount was still too fresh to afford the *Vicaire Savoyard* any place in the parade, but if *Émile* had to be cut to ribbons to conceal the cracks in the thermidorian coalition, it still fared better than the *Contrat Social*. Having so recently reasserted its independence from a would-be messiah, the Convention was in no rush to reconsider the merits of Rousseau's all-powerful Legislator, while his reservations about representative democracy must have seemed equally inopportune to deputies who had spent the past year fending off the sections' claims that they were merely *mandataires*. As a result, the *Contrat Social's* significance was persistently played down in preparations for the parade. Pouring scorn on the authors who had awarded the work pride of place in the political awakening of the *ancien régime*, Lakanal discounted its influence on pre-Revolutionary public opinion as negligible, and his assessment of its relevance to the current political climate was hardly any more enthusiastic.⁷³ Dismissing it as 'trop au-dessus de la portée commune des esprits' to ever serve as a manual for modern politics, he consigned a copy of this too-troubling book to a velvet cushion at the end of the cortège, where hardly anyone seems to have noticed it.⁷⁴ In terms of its

⁷² This theme had been constantly repeated during earlier commemorations. In May 1791, for example, Vachard, speaking at the unveiling of Rousseau's bust in the *Société des Indigens*' chamber in the rue Jacob, had hailed him as 'l'organe d'un Dieu bienfaisant'. Similarly, in germinal *an II*, and the timing of this intervention is significant enough in itself, an earlier attempt to implement Rousseau's pantheonisation had singled out his advocacy of 'l'idée consolante de la Divinité' as reason enough to honour him. Anon. *Installation de Jean-Jacques Rousseau, auteur du Contrat Social dans la société des Indigens...*, (Paris, 1791) p. 3 and Guillaume, *C. I. P.* vol. iv, p. 475.

⁷³ Lakanal was quite explicit on this point. To those who argued that the *Contrat Social* had paved the way for the Revolution, he insisted that 'les grandes maximes développés dans le *Contrat Social*... produisirent alors peu d'effet; on ne les entendit assez pour en profiter.' Lakanal, *Rapport...*, p. 4.

⁷⁴ Ibid. With the exception of the *Feuille Villageoise*, the *Contrat Social's* presence in the procession went entirely unremarked in the press. *La Feuille Villageoise*, no. 6, 30 vendémiaire an III, p. 91.

content, the commemoration of Rousseau's contribution to Revolutionary culture had contracted dramatically. Rousseau may have been, as Ozouf suggests, 'au cœur de la fête' in vendémiaire, but with the *Contrat Social* safely relegated to the rear of the procession and the *Vicaire Savoyard* spurned in favour of the less divisive *Devin du Village*, this was not the Rousseau most revolutionaries had invoked over the previous five years.⁷⁵ Ideologically emasculated and spiritually stripped bare, this was a Rousseau tailor-made for the year III.

As a spectacle, the ceremony on 20 vendémiaire had sought to create consensus by appearing to be above politics, and as a spectacle, it was extremely consistent. Indeed, only one obviously partisan point was allowed to mar the pastoral delights of the day, but it was a significant one as it came at the very end of the festivities when the president of the Convention, Cambacérès, delivered his closing address on the steps of the Panthéon. Having devoted most of his brief speech to extolling the dignity of Rousseau's poverty and the breath of his benevolence, Cambacérès ended by observing that the chief lesson to be learnt from his 'politique sublime' was that 'quiconque est plus sévère que la loi est un tyran.'⁷⁶ It was a crudely calculating note to end on, but the unabashed opportunism of this conclusion seems to epitomise the entire event. It was perhaps less hypocritical than the Convention's claim to incarnate the legacy of 'l'apôtre des bonnes mœurs, le bienfaiteur de l'humanité', and a winter of conspicuous consumption and equally conspicuous starvation would soon expose that conceit for the cant that it was, but it was no less self-serving.⁷⁷ For all the deputies' professed desire to do 'justice' to Jean-Jacques' memory, for all their talk of veneration and respect, celebrating the Revolution's debt to Rousseau had come down to just one more opportunity to denounce the deposed 'tyran.' Lest anyone should have missed the point, the *Décade Philosophique* drove the message home in a report on the festival that devoted more attention to denouncing Robespierre for having affected an admiration for Rousseau while 'proscrivant ses principes' than it did to discussing how those principles might ever be realised.⁷⁸ Like the pantheonisation of Voltaire three years previously, Rousseau had been returned to Paris with retribution

⁷⁵ Ozouf, 'Thermidor ou le travail de l'oubli', p. 96.

⁷⁶ Cambacérès, *Discours prononcé par le Président de la Convention nationale lors de la translation des cendres de Jean-Jacques Rousseau...*, (Paris, an III), p. 2.

⁷⁷ *La Feuille Villageoise*, no. 66, 25 vendémiaire an III, p. 66.

⁷⁸ *La Décade Philosophique*, vol. iii, p. 106.

rather than recognition in mind, and just as it had in July 1791, the deputies' desire for revenge came at a cost. Depoliticised and very largely diminished, the figure that emerged from this sentimental charade was a caricature, a travesty even, of the range and radicalism, of Jean-Jacques' writings, but in vendémiaire *an III*, this was a small price to pay for rescuing Rousseau, and by extension, the Revolution, from the memory of Robespierre's Republic of Virtue.

A desperate desire to dissociate the Republic from its recent past had dispatched Marat to the Panthéon, and three weeks later, the same desperation had finally dislodged Rousseau from his resting place on the *île des peupliers*. And yet, however calculating the deputies' decision to commemorate Rousseau had been and however cautious their representation of his legacy was, vendémiaire's ceremony was, at least superficially, a success. The streets had been crowded and the public cheerful and, for once, the critics had stayed quiet. The odd complaint was heard concerning the desecration of the *île des peupliers*, but even these objections were borne out of a wistful respect for Rousseau's last wishes rather than any real antipathy to the idea of honouring his memory, and elsewhere the reception was rapturous.⁷⁹ Indeed, when even royalist papers like the *Journal de Perlet* acclaimed the festival as 'grande comme le génie qu'elle honorait', criticism was almost nowhere to be heard.⁸⁰ Public opinion was united in applauding the ceremony and this success even extended to the commercial sphere where the festival sparked a renewed interest in all things relating to Rousseau. After its airs had been so effectively advertised during the procession, the *Devin du Village* was revived in theatres all over the city, where performances continued to draw crowds until well into the following year, while episodes from Rousseau's life provided ample material for a number of new comic operas throughout the winter.⁸¹ The city's impresarios were quick to capitalise on the ceremony's commercial potential and so were their colleagues in the visual arts, and a

⁷⁹ Although its criticism of the deputies' decision remained relatively muted, this nostalgic regard for the sanctity of Rousseau's last wishes is clear in the anon., *Voyage à Ermenonville, ou lettre sur la translation de J. J. Rousseau au Panthéon*, (Paris, an III) B. N. Lb41/1346, pp. 27-32.

⁸⁰ Cited in Aulard, *Paris pendant la réaction*, vol. i, p. 161.

⁸¹ Five separate theatres, the Ambigu-Comique, the Académie de la Musique, the Théâtre des Grands Danseurs, the Lyrique and the Théâtre de Lycée staged *Le Devin du Village* in the wake of the festival and these performances continued on a regular basis into the summer of 1795. Elsewhere, Andrieux's *L'Enfance de Jean-Jacques Rousseau* and Desriau's *L'Ombre de Jean-Jacques Rousseau* were performed on and off in the Théâtre Italien and the Variétés Amusantes throughout the winter. These details were compiled using the ARTFL Project's 'The Parisian Stage during the French Revolution' database at the University of Chicago.

fresh crop of commemorative portraits and busts quickly appeared to mark the occasion. Indeed, by February 1795, demand for busts of Rousseau had increased so dramatically that they had tripled in price.⁸² While this inflation was almost certainly fuelled by the need to fill the niches suddenly left vacant by the destruction of so many plaster Marats, it also implies the existence of a real market for Rousseau's memory, a market that would seem to vindicate the Convention's attempt to embark upon the new era under the auspices of *Jean-Jacques*. Momentarily at least, the soothing sounds of the *Devin du Village* had drowned out the discord of politics after the Terror.

Just as Ermenonville had always appealed across a broad range of pre-Revolutionary opinion, so Rousseau's pantheonisation appeared to have united a deeply divided polity around an idealised image of the past. And yet, for all this ceremony's seeming success, celebrating the *philosophes* as the Revolution's founding fathers could no more unite France after *an II* than commemorating the Convention's dead could absolve their colleagues of their part in the Terror. On the contrary, the consensus celebrated that vendémiaire was an illusion, a fiction founded on the particular political circumstances of a still uncertain autumn and sustained by Jean-Jacques' unique ability to appeal to radicals and reactionaries alike, and neither of those conditions could ever apply again. Indeed, within weeks of Rousseau's pantheonisation, the confusion that had followed those first few months after Robespierre's fall began to clarify as Thermidorian politics settled down to the more serious business of show trials and scapegoating. The politics of retribution left little time for many other acts of recognition in *an III*, but just as importantly, after Rousseau, there was no figure from the philosophic past who could possibly command anything like the same respect. Mably certainly could not, and for all their anxiety to identify with the enlightened past in vendémiaire, the deputies let Jean Dusaulx's call for his pantheonisation sink without trace the following prairial.⁸³ Once again, Dusaulx's sense of timing hardly added to his scheme's appeal. The aftermath of one of the Revolution's bloodiest *journées* was no time to call crowds out onto the streets for another parade, and in any event, the Convention was far too

⁸² Aulard, *Paris pendant la réaction*, vol. i, p. 451.

⁸³ Dusaulx's suggestion on the 21st of prairial was referred to committee where it was promptly forgotten about. *A. M.* no. 264, 24 prairial an III, p. 658 and Guillaume, *C. I. P.* vol. vi, p. 278.

busy mopping up the remains of the popular movement to even consider embarking on any more philosophic pageantry. However, if prairial year III was a particularly inauspicious occasion to propose another pantheonisation, there were other, more far-reaching, reasons for the Convention's refusal to countenance Dusaulx's suggestion as well. Coming so soon after the *ami du peuple's* eviction had transformed the Panthéon into what one deputy rather melodramatically described as a 'caveau sinistre' and with pamphleteers still insisting that the entire building had been polluted by Marat's 'profane' presence, Dusaulx's proposal was doomed from the very start.⁸⁴

Dusaulx undoubtedly chose his moment poorly, but the passage of time did little to enhance either the Panthéon's standing or the *philosophes'* cause, and a year later, the Councils proved just as unwilling to entertain either Pastoret's call for Montesquieu's pantheonisation or Chénier's suggestion that Descartes should finally take his place alongside Voltaire and Rousseau. Pastoret's bid to have Montesquieu honoured as the 'précurseur de la liberté' was admittedly referred to committee in pluviôse an IV, but this was only to palm Pastoret off and the plan came to nothing.⁸⁵ For all his valorisation of Republican *vertu*, the Cinq-Cents showed no interest in honouring Montesquieu, and their colleagues in the Anciens proved just as unwilling to endorse the *Esprit des Lois* as any kind of influence. Presented with a bust of the *philosophe* a few weeks after Pastoret's proposal had fallen on deaf ears, the deputies accepted the gift, but refused to display it in their chamber as requested, and packed it off to the assembly's archives instead.⁸⁶ Both Dusaulx's and Pastoret's initiatives were dismissed without much ado, but Chénier's suggestion concerning Descartes proved more difficult to dispose of because, like Rousseau, the decision to dispatch Descartes to the Panthéon had already been taken long before. The Convention had first decreed his pantheonisation in October 1793, but like so many of its other initiatives, it remained unexecuted when Chénier raised this 'presque oublié' honour in floréal an IV.⁸⁷ The question of Descartes' destination, therefore, required a full debate in May 1796, a courtesy that had been denied both Mably and Montesquieu, but the

⁸⁴ For André Dumont's description of the Panthéon, see A. M. no. 142, 23 pluviôse an III, p. 416. For the suggestion that the Panthéon was now tainted and needed to be 'purifier', see L.-M. Henriquez, *La Dépanthéonisation de J.-P. Marat, patron des hommes de sang...*, (Paris, s.d.) B. N. Lb41/4252, p. 12.

⁸⁵ A. M. no. 145, 25 pluviôse an IV, p. 439.

⁸⁶ A. M. no. 166, 16 ventôse an IV, p. 607.

⁸⁷ A. M. no. 279, 6 October 1793, p. 44, and no. 235, 25 floréal an IV, pp. 936-7.

discussion that ensued merely served to crystallise the doubts that had been steadily undermining public confidence in the Panthéon ever since pluviôse an III.

Few expressed those doubts more forcefully than Louis-Sébastien Mercier whose response to Chénier's proposal both settled the debate on Descartes and fixed the future direction of Directorial policy towards the Panthéon. Less an assessment of Descartes' virtues as a philosopher than a sweeping reappraisal of the politics of Revolutionary remembrance, Mercier's reply to Chénier's initiative was an unqualified call for caution in all things commemorative.⁸⁸ His entire speech was a damning indictment of the very idea that politicians should try to pre-empt posterity by passing judgement on a writer's worth, but having first persuaded his colleagues not to meddle in the Republic of Letters' affairs, Mercier concluded with the wider warning: 'gardons-nous désormais de panthéoniser à la légère.'⁸⁹ Coming from a former eulogist of Descartes and an early advocate of the Panthéon's charms, this advice amounted to an about-turn of quite astonishing proportions, but following the chaotic events of pluviôse an III, Mercier's speech captured the sceptical mood of the Cinq-Cents and effectively decided the debate.⁹⁰ After a discussion that had frequently descended into gales of derisive laughter, Chénier's proposal was shelved and Descartes' coffin deposited among the curiosities in the *Musée des Monuments Français* instead.⁹¹ Denied his place among the immortals, no pageantry proclaimed Descartes' arrival in Alexandre Lenoir's care, but while the main thrust of Mercier's argument put paid to this particular pantheonisation, its corollary, that the Panthéon should be reserved for 'les héros et les martyrs de la révolution' had far wider implications as well.⁹² Taken in tandem with the recently revived legislation prohibiting the pantheonisation of anyone until ten years after their death, the deputies' acceptance of Mercier's argument amounted to a self-denying ordinance in

⁸⁸ *Discours de L.-S. Mercier prononcé le 18 floréal an IV sur René Descartes*, (Paris, an IV) reprinted in Mercier, *Le Nouveau Paris*, pp. 858-77.

⁸⁹ Mercier's advice could not have been clearer on this: 'La république des lettres a ses palmes comme elle a ses débats; n'entrons points dans ses débats et ne distribuons point ses palmes.' Ibid. p. 871.

⁹⁰ Descartes had been the subject of one of Mercier's first literary ventures when he entered the *Académie Française's* essay competition in 1765 with an *Éloge de René Descartes*. He had also, as we have already seen, signed the petition calling for Rousseau's pantheonisation in September 1791.

⁹¹ For the laughter that repeatedly interrupted the debate, A. M. no. 235, 25 floréal an IV, p. 937. For Descartes' removal to the *Musée's* garden, see A. Lenoir, *Description historique et chronologique des sculptures réunies au Musée des Monumens Français*, (Paris 1806 ed.) pp. 207-9.

⁹² *Discours de L.-S. Mercier* in *Le Nouveau Paris*, p. 871.

all but name.⁹³ The sightseers continued to flock up the Mont-Sainte-Geneviève to admire what remained of Soufflot's artistry, but after May 1796, they were the only ones who did.⁹⁴ Whereas the Convention had simply suspended its profligate creation of *Grands Hommes*, the Cinq-Cents had, to all intents and purposes, shut the Panthéon down.⁹⁵

There is little reason to imagine that this outcome was anything but intentional. Acutely aware that, as Mercier put it, l'immortalité n'est point en sûreté au Panthéon' and unwilling to incur the 'ridicule des canonisations' that had engulfed the Convention, the Councils appear to have been only too willing to abandon the Panthéon to the tender mercies of the tourist trade.⁹⁶ By the year IV, the Revolution's leading *lieu de mémoire* had become an embarrassment, and with its well-publicised structural instability cruelly mimicking its all obvious political problems, a dangerous one at that. Politics had moved on, leaving the Panthéon behind, a discredited, and apparently decaying, relic of a régime most people would rather forget. And yet, while circumstances had clearly eroded the Panthéon's credibility, the distaste engendered by the commemorative comings and goings of the year III cannot fully explain why the Directory turned its back on the icons of the enlightened past and looked instead to the military heroes who would henceforth dominate the Republic's rites of remembrance. Rather, this newfound reluctance to honour the *philosophes* as the Revolution's founding fathers was primarily, and paradoxically, a response to the re-emergence of a free market in ideas after the Terror.⁹⁷ Mercier's 'ne précipitons point nos apothéoses' was probably the most prudent policy to hand in *an IV*, but the Councils heeded it chiefly because they could no longer count upon a compliant press and a cowed public opinion to endorse their attempts to trace the Revolution's

⁹³ The decree of 20 pluviôse *an III* had stipulated that 'Les honneurs du Panthéon ne pourront être décernés à aucune citoyen... que dix ans après sa mort.' A. M. no. 142, 22 pluviôse *an III*, p. 416.

⁹⁴ The Panthéon was already teeming with visitors in 1796, although some of them were less than impressed. The United Irish emissary, Wolfe Tone, for example, admired the ideas that had inspired the Panthéon and, but concluded that the French had been 'in too great a hurry to people it.' *The Autobiography of Theobald Wolfe Tone*, 2 vols. (Dublin, 1867 ed) vol. i, pp. 267-8. For a similar view, see the thoughts of the anonymous English visitor in November 1796 in *A Sketch of Modern France, in a series of letters to a lady of fashion... by a lady*, (London, 1798 ed.) p. 140.

⁹⁵ Calling for an alternative venue for honouring the nation's heroes a few months after this debate, Daubermesnil confirmed the effective closure of the Panthéon for 'un temps assez long pour que la réflexion put assurer la stabilité des jugements que l'on devait prendre'. Daubermesnil, *Rapport sur les honneurs à rendre aux guerriers morts, Conseil des 500, le 5 thermidor an IV*, (Paris, *an IV*) p. 3.

⁹⁶ Mercier, *Le Nouveau Paris*, p. 873.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 873.

ancestry back to the Republic of Letters, or even accept that ancestry as anything worth celebrating.⁹⁸

The effective collapse of state censorship after the Terror and the reappearance of an outspoken right-wing press over the course of the year III changed the rules of the commemorative game completely. It allowed the 'enemies of the enlightenment' to emerge from the shadows and resume their crusade against *la philosophie* with an infinitely expanded arsenal of accusations, and more importantly, a vastly increased audience.⁹⁹ One of the results of this realignment in public opinion was that the relationship between Enlightenment and Revolution became, in purely political terms, too contentious to commemorate. At first, however, this was not immediately apparent. For much of the year III, the right-wing press was too preoccupied with its pursuit of the *conventionnels* and *clubistes* who had presided over the Terror to bother much with the memory of long-dead *philosophes*, but the right's focus soon shifted elsewhere. As the year IV began, reactionary writers increasingly began to look beyond the *terroristes* to the men they claimed had inspired them, the *philosophes* who had 'ouvert de leurs mains et pavé de leurs têtes' the path to the Terror.¹⁰⁰

The essentials of this argument were familiar enough. Burke, Barruel and the lesser lights of the royalist press had branded the new régime the bastard issue of a 'barbarous philosophy' since its very beginning, but from 1795 onwards, the context in which writers such as Rivarol hurled their anathemas against the *gouvernement révolutionnaire*, that 'montreuse alliance de mots, préparée par le philosophie du siècle' changed completely.¹⁰¹ After *an II*, when France had had its fill of Reason and when Burke's claim that 'in the groves of *their* academy, at the end of every vista, you see nothing but the gallows' must have seemed considerably more convincing than it ever could in 1790, the right won a raft of converts to its cause.¹⁰² One-time radicals such as Richer-Sérizy and, more spectacularly, former *philosophes* like La

⁹⁸ Mercier, *Le Nouveau Paris*, p. 871.

⁹⁹ On the resumption of the right-wing campaign against *la philosophie* after the Terror, see D. McMahon, *Enemies of the Enlightenment: the French Counter-Enlightenment and the Making of Modernity*, (Oxford, 2001) p. 89-153 and J. Popkin, *The Right-Wing Press in France, 1792-1800*, (Chapel Hill, 1982)

¹⁰⁰ Rivarol, *De la Philosophie Moderne*, (Paris, an IV) p. 68.

¹⁰¹ E. Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, (London, 1988 ed.) p. 171 and Rivarol, *De la Philosophie Moderne*, p. 69.

¹⁰² Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, pp. 171-2.

Harpe defected in droves to the conservative camp after the Terror, turning on their erstwhile enlightened allies as 'les dignes précurseurs des hommes révolutionnaires, des Chaumette, des Hébert et des Marat' with a vehemence that the veterans of the right could hardly rival.¹⁰³ The ferocity of these attacks on the 'barbares du dix-huitième siècle qui se sont nommés philosophes' was significant enough in itself, but more importantly, the right's apocalyptic analysis of the Revolution's origins also enjoyed a much wider audience after Thermidor than ever before.¹⁰⁴ The repeated printings of Rivarol's *De la philosophie moderne*, the crowds that flocked to hear La Harpe's 'cours... d'imprécations contre la Révolution' in the *Lycée* and the multiple editions his *Du fanatisme dans la langue révolutionnaire* went through after February 1797 eclipsed all Republican attempts at rebuttal, and this ascendancy was even more apparent in the newspaper press.¹⁰⁵ Conservatives titles like the *Véridique* and the *Quoditienne* were to the fore in spreading the counter-revolutionary critique of the salon as the seedbed of the Terror, and despite the subsidies they received very few Republican papers could compete with their circulation figures.¹⁰⁶ While the right did not exactly redefine the terms of the debate on the relationship between the enlightened past and the Revolutionary present, and in practice, it did not really need to, its embittered explanation of the Revolution's excesses acquired an entirely new impetus after the Terror.¹⁰⁷

Few episodes illustrate the implications of this shift in the balance of public opinion more clearly than the controversy that erupted following the publication, decades after they were first written, of Diderot's *Jacques le Fataliste* and *La Religieuse* in September 1797. Stylistically unconventional and sexually uninhibited, the two novels provoked a 'scandale' of extraordinary intensity lasting well into the spring of

¹⁰³ J.-F. La Harpe, *Du Fanatisme dans la langue Révolutionnaire ou de la persécution suscitée par les Barbares du Dix-Huitième Siècle...*, (Paris, an V) p. 5.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ For a contemporary critique of La Harpe's course in the *Lycée*, see Aulard, *Paris pendant la réaction*, vol. iii, p. 607. La Harpe's biographer, Todd, notes that *Du fanatisme* was reprinted three times in the two months after its first publication in February 1797, and this interest continued with, according to McMahon, another sixteen editions appearing over the following years. C. Todd, *Voltaire's Disciple: Jean-François de la Harpe*, (London, 1972) p. 64 and McMahon, *Enemies of the Enlightenment*, p. 115.

¹⁰⁶ Most of the available evidence suggests that right-wing titles easily outsold Republican ones under the Directory. Popkin, *The Right-Wing Press*, p. 79 and Gough, *The Newspaper Press*, p. 131.

¹⁰⁷ La Harpe's repudiation of the *philosophes* was a *volte-face* in political terms only. As an analysis of the Revolution's origins, it was also remarkably consistent with the position he had articulated seven years before, in an address to the National Assembly in August 1790, when he had acclaimed the 'gens de lettres' as 'les premiers moteurs de cette grande et heureuse révolution.' A. P. vol. xviii, p. 250.

the year V.¹⁰⁸ Much more than a literary dispute, this debate quickly became a political *cause célèbre* as even editors who rarely commented on artistic affairs became embroiled in this Revolutionary battle of the books. Widely condemned as both socially and sexually subversive, the two novels afforded the right-wing press an unrivalled opportunity to launch a fresh wave of invective, not only against Diderot and his 'excréments posthumes', but also against the entire 'secte encyclopédique' and more importantly, the Revolutionary 'crimes commis sous ses bannières'.¹⁰⁹ Condemning the two books as typical of the philosophy that had 'fait tant de ravages parmi nous', the right's critique was a comprehensive attack on the Enlightenment and all its works, but its chief target, and *La Religieuse's* sketch of convent life offered ample ammunition in this respect, was unquestionably the religious havoc wreaked by this 'fatal génie'.¹¹⁰ Denouncing Diderot as the doyen of enlightened atheism, the right traced the roots of the dechristianising terror inexorably back to a conspiracy of impious and immoral *philosophes*. For Michaud, writing in the widely read *Quotidienne*, *La Religieuse* was, in every sense, a graphic demonstration of

le plan que les philosophes ont constamment suivi pendant plus de cinquante ans pour détruire, par toute espèce de moyens, la religion chrétienne. Il était réservé, par la providence, aux Anarcharsis Clootz, aux Gobet, [sic] aux Hébert, aux Chaumette et aux Fauchet, d'accomplir une révolution que l'auteur moral des *Bijoux indiscrets*, et celui de la *Pucelle* avoient depuis si long tems commencée.¹¹¹

While not everyone on the right shared Michaud's certainty that providence had any part to play in realizing the *philosophes'* plans, his account of the lineage that led directly from 'les Voltaire, les Diderot, et les d'Alembert' to the extremists of the year II was repeated throughout the reactionary press.¹¹² Far from denying the ideological ancestry that deputies in every assembly had insisted upon since 1789, the right simply turned this argument on its head, and condemned the entire Revolutionary edifice as the creation of a philosophic cabal with the Terror as its logical conclusion

¹⁰⁸ *Journal Général de France*, no. 77, 17 frimaire an V, p. 311. The following account is largely drawn from the collection of newspaper articles assembled in 'Jacques le fataliste et *La Religieuse* devant la critique révolutionnaire, 1796-1800, Textes recueillis et présentés par J. de Booy et A. Freer', S. V. E. C. vol. xxxiii, (Geneva, 1965)

¹⁰⁹ *Le Véridique*, 19 frimaire an V, pp. 2-3 and *Gazette français*, no. 1801, 11 December 1796, p. 237.

¹¹⁰ *Le Feuille du jour*, no. 181, 24 vendémiaire an V, p. 2.

¹¹¹ *La Quotidienne*, no. 202, 14 November 1796, pp. 1-2.

¹¹² *Ibid.* See also the *Journal Général de France*, no. 77, 17 frimaire an V, p. 311, *Le Véridique*, 19 frimaire an V, pp. 2-3, *Gazette français*, no. 1801, 11 December 1796, p. 237, and *L'Accusateur public*, no. 32, 22 messidor an V, p. 23

and the *sans-culottes* rather improbably cast as the *philosophes* 'dignes élèves'.¹¹³ As an analysis of the Revolution's origins, this was certainly a crude argument, but it was scarcely any more simplistic than successive assemblies' attempts to conscript their own caricatures of Voltaire and Rousseau to the Revolutionary cause, and more importantly, it was increasingly common currency under the Directory. By the winter of *an V*, the right's contention that Diderot and, by extension, the Enlightenment as a whole had

créé la langue révolutionnaire, quarante ans au moins avant la révolution; il fut, comme on l'a judicieusement observé, le précurseur des Hébert et des Chaumette

had become a commonplace, a commonplace that a deeply divided Republican press was poorly placed to contradict.¹¹⁴

The Revolutionary response to this 'déchainement universel contre Diderot' was at best fractured.¹¹⁵ Unlike Voltaire or Rousseau, or even Montesquieu or Mably, few Revolutionaries had ever expressed any great affinity with Diderot. The odd, isolated axiom had been culled from his works over the years, as in July 1791 when the *Bouche de Fer* prefaced an attack on the monarchy after Varennes with its own, suitably amended, version of the epigram from *Les Eleuthéromanes*:

Quand le dernier roi sera pendu avec les boyaux du dernier prêtre (célibataire), le génie humain pourra espérer d'être heureux

but in the main, respectable Revolutionary opinion was reluctant to acclaim the author of *Les Bijoux indiscrets* as any kind of inspiration.¹¹⁶ The right's onslaught in *an V*, however, required a response, especially as this offensive had so quickly expanded to incorporate the Enlightenment in its entirety. And yet, entering the debate over these two novels proved problematic for the Republican press as the very aspects of Diderot's writing that had troubled earlier Revolutionaries continued to confound his would-be champions in 1797. His playful disregard for literary and philosophical propriety, for example, perplexed many of his more strait-laced reviewers, and criticism of *Jacques le fataliste*'s unstructured 'assemblage d'anecdotes,

¹¹³ *La Quotidienne*, no. 202, 14 November 1796, pp. 1-2.

¹¹⁴ *Le Véridique*, 29 brumaire *an V*, 19-11-96, pp. 2-3

¹¹⁵ *L'Éclair*, no. 386, 8 brumaire *an V* p. 3-4.

¹¹⁶ This paraphrase was published with the by-line: 'paroles familières de Diderot.' *La Bouche de Fer*, no. 89, 11 July 1791, p. 1.

d'historiettes, d'aventures' was widespread in the Republican press.¹¹⁷ For *idéologue* worthies like Roederer and Garat, Diderot's unorthodox style and bawdy humour made for a rather unsettling read, but if right-thinking Republicans found Diderot's stubborn refusal to be entirely serious exasperating, his sensational account of sexual corruption in the cloister left Republican commentators even more at a loss.¹¹⁸ While the more anticlerical elements of the press were ready enough to excuse *La Religieuse's* description of 'des penchans désordonnés' as essential in any exposé of convent life, or justified Diderot's candour on account of its continued relevance across a continent that inexplicably continued to resist French deliverance from fanaticism, this defence left many other readers cold.¹¹⁹ Unable to condone Diderot's depiction of Sapphic seduction and 'révolté des peintures lubriques et indécentes de cet amour sacrilège', several commentators were reduced to echoing the outrage of the right, but many more simply stayed silent.¹²⁰ Far fewer Republican papers dared review *La Religieuse* than had commented on *Jacques le fataliste*, and those that did were too haunted by the need to acquit Diderot of the charge of obscenity to present a united front against his conservative critics. Too engrossed with its supposed stylistic faults and too embarrassed by its sexual outspokenness to ever mount a coherent defence of the Enlightenment, the Republican literary establishment all but surrendered the debate over *La Religieuse* to the right.

In the face of a sustained offensive from the reactionary right, the Republican response to Diderot's works lacked both the intellectual consistency and political single-mindedness of the Counter-Revolution's critique. Even more damagingly, the

¹¹⁷ *Journal d'économie publique*, no. 6, 30 vendémiaire an V, pp. 257-61. Garat found *Jacques le fataliste's* 'entrelassement d'histoires ou d'historiettes liées ensemble... par hasard' even more annoying, and the *Décade Philosophique* was almost as critical of this 'suite de caprices, de boutades'. *La Clef du cabinet des souverains*, no. 69, 9 germinal an V, p. 715 and *La Décade Philosophique*, no. 4, 10 brumaire an V, pp. 224-30.

¹¹⁸ *Mercure français*, no. 7, 10 frimaire an V, p. 32. While Roederer grudgingly concluded that *Jacques le fataliste*, was not actually immoral, it conceded that 'ce n'est pas un de ces livres qu'un père ou une mère de famille puissent laisser trainer sur leur cheminée'. *Journal d'économie publique*, no. 6, 30 vendémiaire an V, pp. 257-61.

¹¹⁹ A. M. no. 81, 21 frimaire an V, p. 324 and *Nouvelles politique, nationales et étrangères*, no. 36, 6 brumaire an V, p. 143. Similarly, Andrieux's review of *La Religieuse* in the *Décade Philosophique* concluded that the book 'restera comme un monument de ce qu'étaient autrefois les couvens, fléau né de l'ignorance et du fanatisme en délire, contre lequel les philosophes avaient si longtemps et si vainement réclamé, et dont la révolution française délivrera l'Europe d'ici à peu d'années si l'Europe ne s'obstine pas à vouloir faire des pas rétrogrades vers la barbarie et l'abrutissement.' *La Décade Philosophique*, no. 3, 30 vendémiaire an V, p. 165.

¹²⁰ *Le Nouvelliste littéraire, des sciences et des arts*, no. 12, 15 nivôse an V, p. 2.

more extreme elements of the Jacobin press were almost as inclined to use Diderot's memory to condemn the current régime as their right-wing opponents, albeit for quite different reasons. For neo-Jacobin papers like the *Journal des Hommes Libres*, the publication of *La Religieuse* constituted a renewed call to anticlerical arms, and by implication, another reason to reproach the authorities for their timidity in tolerating a religious revival across the Republic.¹²¹ However, for other radicals, such as Lebois, the publication of the two books provided a pretext for a much more explicit attack on the powers that be. Defending Diderot for no other reason than 'les journaux des chouans en dissent beaucoup de mal', Lebois entered this debate in early brumaire with the sole purpose of denouncing the Directory, and its new Minister of Police in particular:

le républicain Diderot, vivant sous un régime monarchique, écrivit, imprima, et publia ses idées en faveur d'une république, sans avoir été égorgé, guillotiné ou fusillé... Ce n'est pas que les Cochons de ce tems-là aimassent beaucoup plus la république que les Cochons d'aujourd'hui; qu'ils fussent meilleurs, mais c'est qu'ils se contentoient de fouiller dans les ordures, et de ronger des os, tandis que les nôtres font ce qu'ils peuvent pour nous y mettre nous mêmes et dévorer les meilleurs morceaux.¹²²

For all its outrage concerning the Directory's repressive policies towards the left, Lebois' article had very little to do with Diderot and absolutely nothing constructive to say about the Revolution's relationship with the enlightened past. And yet, the sheer opportunism of this outburst does reveal the disarray the Diderot debate had reduced the Republican camp to in the winter of 1796, and that disarray would only deepen when Babeuf declared his ideological debt to Diderot during his trial the following summer. This debt was, of course, misplaced, but the fact that Babeuf's acclamation of 'le maître du communisme' was based on an incorrect attribution of Morelly's *Code de la Nature* is largely beside the point, because in May 1797, his mistaken tribute just seemed to bear out everything the right had written the previous winter. The appearance of a new edition of Diderot's works in 1798 and its editor's efforts to break the link with the 'hommes sanguinaires' that the trial at Vendôme had helped to establish is almost equally irrelevant because by then, the damage had already been done.¹²³ At the very moment when the spectre of conspiratorial *sans-*

¹²¹ See for example, *Le Républicain du Nord*, no. 367, 24 brumaire an V, pp. 3-4 and the *Journal des Hommes Libres*, no. 43, 28 brumaire an V, pp. 171-2.

¹²² *L'Ami du Peuple*, no. 211, 2 brumaire an V, p. 2

¹²³ La Harpe, for one, continued to make political capital out of this connection for years to come. For Naigeon's attempts to rehabilitate Diderot with a new edition of his works and La Harpe's studious

culottisme seemed ready to stalk the land once more, Babeuf had unwittingly lend his authority to the right's description of Diderot as a dangerous anarchist, an 'apôtre de l'athéisme' and 'le véritable instituteur de la sans-culotterie'.¹²⁴

The truce that had briefly opened up over Rousseau's remains in 1794 had decisively broken down. Outmanoeuvred by the extremists on its flanks and outsold on the streets, the Directory could no longer look to the memory of a too controversial Republic of Letters to bolster the moral authority of the Republic of the year III. The result, for moderate Revolutionary opinion, was a crippling loss of nerve. Certainly, the Directory held firm to its faith in reason, and in *idéologie*, it espoused the most uncompromisingly rational of all doctrines, but after the year IV, it did so discreetly, in the cosy confines of the *Institut*, where its consequences could be safely contained. In public, in the chamber of the Cinq-Cents where statues of Brutus, Lycurgus, Cicero and Solon now adorned the alcoves once occupied by enlightened thinkers, and on the streets of Paris where military parades took the place of philosophic pageants, the Directory was reluctant to acclaim its debt to the *philosophes* too openly.¹²⁵ It might seem ironic that the most ostentatiously enlightened régime of the entire decade, a régime inaugurated as 'le fruit... de la philosophie', the régime of the *Institut* and the *Décade Philosophique*, should have abandoned the commemoration of *la philosophie* in favour of the martial values the *philosophes* had always scorned, but the irony is only apparent.¹²⁶ Political expediency had been the hallmark of successive assemblies' attempts to exploit the memory of the Enlightenment to enhance their own authority, and after *an III*, the same logic decreed that the parades commemorating the *philosophes*' contribution to Revolutionary culture should finally cease. After Fouché and Chaumette, and again after Babeuf and his ill-fated Equals, it had become all too easy for a renascent right-wing press to denounce the *philosophes* for having 'posé les principes' from which 'les assassins ont tiré les

disregard of it, see D. Brewer, *The Discourse of Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century France*, (Cambridge, 1993), p. 287.

¹²⁴ *L'Accusateur public*, no. 32, 22 messidor an V, p. 23. This was Bourlet de Vauxcelles' description of Diderot. Cited in Brewer, *The Discourse of Enlightenment*, p. 215.

¹²⁵ For the classical statues in the Cinq-Cents, see A. M. no. 166, 16 ventôse an IV, p. 607.

¹²⁶ Boissy d'Anglas, 'Discours préliminaire au projet de constitution pour la république française', A. M. no. 281, 11 messidor an III, p. 81.

consequences' without supplying them with the ammunition of any more ill-considered pantheonisations.¹²⁷

Confronted by the increasing assurance of the counter-revolutionary press and the mounting cynicism of public opinion, the Directory could no longer risk commemorating the *philosophes* as the Revolution's founding fathers with any confidence of success. Perhaps more corrosively, it had also become increasingly difficult for mainstream Republicans to celebrate the enlightened past with any real conviction either. By the end of the decade, all the old certainties had collapsed, forcing moderates like Mercier and Madame de Staël to reconsider the relationship between enlightened cause and Revolutionary effect that had underpinned so many earlier celebrations of the *philosophes* as the architects of the new régime. For Mercier, writing his world-weary sequel to the *Tableau de Paris* in 1798, this was a deeply disillusioning experience. Where once he had acclaimed the *philosophes* as the saviours of mankind, he now decried 'le philosophisme', that dangerous mishmash of ideas that the *terroristes* and *babouvistes* had distilled from the 'doctrines de Rousseau, Voltaire, Helvétius, Boulanger, Diderot' in order to introduce 'une foule d'erreurs dans toutes les veines du corps politique.'¹²⁸ Blaming the terrorists for having perverted *la saine philosophie* was a common enough theme in Directorial discourse, but Mercier's demoralised conclusion, that 'l'ignorance engendre la barbarie, mais un demi-savoir fait pis encore', suggests the extent to which the self-confidence of earlier years had been eroded by the events of the year II. If this verdict was not exactly a renunciation of all that Mercier had once held dear, it certainly marked a dispirited retreat from the enthusiasm that had acclaimed Rousseau's authorship of the Revolution in 1791, let alone the earlier utopianism of his imaginary *an 2440*, but after the all too real *an II*, such optimism was impossible to sustain. Too many books had been 'mal lus, mal compris, mal entendus', too many principles 'horriblement défigurés' and too much blood spilt down city streets for Mercier to still dream of boulevards lined with the busts of benevolent *philosophes*.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ *La Quotidienne*, no. 202, 24 brumaire an V, p. 1.

¹²⁸ Mercier, *Le Nouveau Paris*, pp. 242-3.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

The Terror had tainted everything, and in *Le Nouveau Paris*, even Rousseau no longer seemed above reproach.¹³⁰

A 'fleuve de sang' had opened up between the *Républicains des lettres* and their Revolutionary heirs, and for a self-confessed 'modéré' like Mercier, that torrent ultimately proved unbridgeable.¹³¹ The only possible solution was to re-invent the terms of the entire debate, and to reverse the chain of causality that had inspired so many commemorations and provoked so much criticism. At the very heart of the Directorial *monde*, Germaine de Staël came close to this fundamental reassessment of the Revolution's relationship with the enlightened past in her unpublished *Des Circonstances actuelles que peuvent terminer la Révolution* in 1798. Surveying the disasters that had engulfed France since 1789, she concluded that events had, quite simply, overtaken the Enlightenment, leaving 'une nation non encore révolutionnée' unprepared for, and unwilling to accept, the radicalism of the new régime.¹³² The Revolution had, in effect, 'arrivée en France avant les lumières qui devaient préparer la République' with the result that the Republic, far from representing the culmination of a century of lights, had actually 'devancé les lumières.'¹³³ While going some way towards salvaging the Enlightenment's reputation from the criticism of the conspiracy theorists, de Staël's verdict, that the Revolution had been, in reality, a retrograde step shared much of Mercier's disillusion if not his despair. In clinging to the belief that a proper system of public instruction might yet repair the damage the Revolution had done, de Staël did at least retain some of the *philosophes'* faith in progress, but whatever her hopes for the future, her analysis clearly left little scope for a return to the uncomplicated commemorations of the early 1790s. Jean-Joseph Mounier's conclusion in his *De l'influence attribuée aux philosophes, aux francs-maçons, et aux illuminés sur la Révolution de France* left even less. Perhaps it took an exile to finally rethink the relationship that an entire generation had taken for granted, but in 1801, when *De l'influence* appeared, a decade of enthusiastic declarations of ideological descent ended with a defensive 'ce ne fut point l'influence de ces principes qui produisit la révolution, ce fut au contraire la révolution qui produisit leur

¹³⁰ Where once Mercier had been ready to absolve Rousseau of all sins, he now disowned much of his political philosophy as 'erroné' and a 'morale de désespoir'. *Le Nouveau Paris*, p. 237.

¹³¹ *Le Nouveau Paris*, p. 243.

¹³² G. de Staël, *Des Circonstances actuelles que peuvent terminer la Révolution et des principes qui doivent fonder la République en France*, (Paris, 1906 ed.) p. 35.

¹³³ *Ibid.* p. 33 and p. 39.

influence'.¹³⁴ As a statement of historical fact, Mounier's verdict was probably a good deal closer to the truth than any of the Revolution's earlier, more extravagant claims concerning its intellectual origins, but as a political position, it was an assessment born of exhaustion above all else. Like the deputies who had sought to disentangle themselves from the politics of posterity by disowning all appeals to honour the *grands hommes* of the Enlightenment after *an III*, Mounier's conclusion was a counsel of despair. The Revolution's relationship with the Republic of Letters, like the memory of Mirabeau and Marat, had become an embarrassment rather than a source of pride.

Unable to command any real sympathy for deputies who so often seemed complicit in the horrors of the past and incapable of creating any consensus around the legacy of a too contentious Enlightenment, the Directory all but abandoned the commemoration of the politician and the *philosophe*, the two figures that had dominated the Revolution's rites of memory since 1789. There were, of course, occasional exceptions to this rule. And yet, neither Pastoret's and Chénier's unsuccessful efforts on behalf of Montesquieu and Descartes nor Eschassériaux's vain call for a monument to the Girondin 'fondateurs de la République' can disguise the overwhelmingly martial character of Republican remembrance after the Terror.¹³⁵ From the thermidorians' *fête des Victoires* in vendémiaire *an III* to the funeral festivals held in honour of Generals Hoche, Joubert and Desaix in the years VI, VII and VIII respectively, commemoration in the closing years of the Republic was dominated by the figure of the dead *défenseur de la patrie*. (See Figure 13) Even the funeral festival held to mark the murder of two deputies at the hands of Austrian troops *en route* from the peace talks at Rastadt conformed to this militaristic trend. While ostensibly honouring Bonnier and Roberjot as peacemakers, the cortège of conscripts that opened proceedings on the Champ de Mars, the cry for vengeance of Chénier's keynote speech, and the artillery salvos that ended their funeral in prairial

¹³⁴ J.-J. Mounier, *De l'influence attribuée aux philosophes, aux francs-maçons, et aux illuminés sur la Révolution de France*, (Tübingen, 1801 ed.) p. 118.

¹³⁵ Eschassériaux, *Motion d'ordre sur les honneurs à rendre aux fondateurs de la République française...*, (Paris, an VI) B. L., F.R. 371 no. 39.

an VII were all geared towards readying the nation for the resumption of hostilities with a ritualised attack on 'la barbarie autrichienne'.¹³⁶

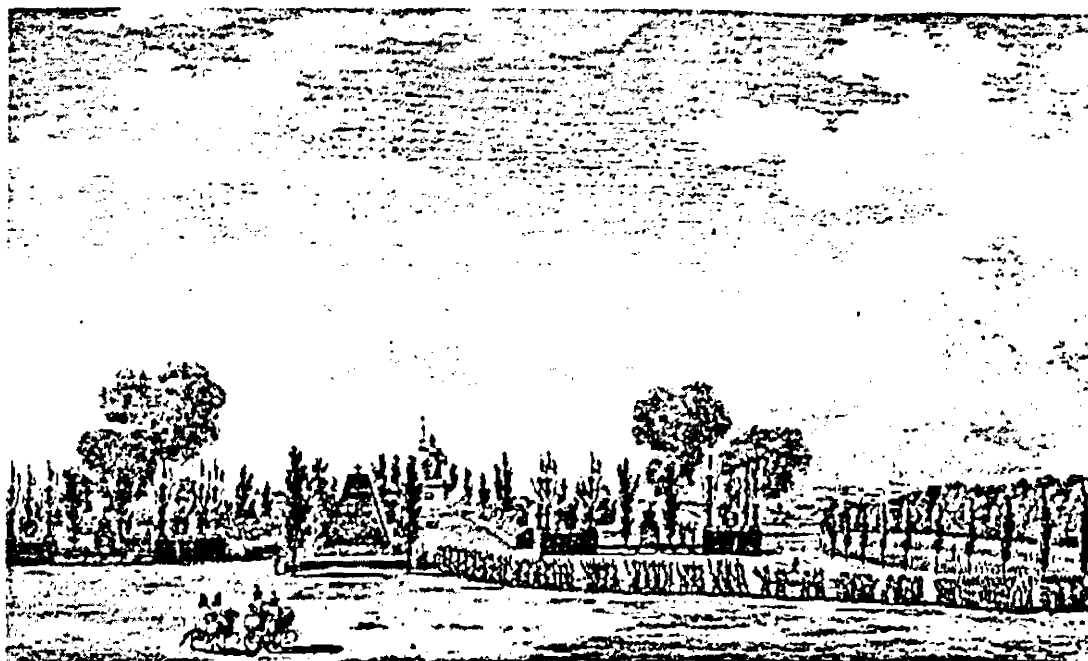


Figure 13, 'Cérémonie funèbre en l'honneur du Général Hoche... célébrée au Champ de Mars, le 10 vendémiaire de l'an VI', B. N. coll. Hennin, no. 12367.

For many historians, this sequence of state funerals represents just one element of the steady militarization of Revolutionary political culture that eventually reached its apogee under the Empire.¹³⁷ Like the ever more bellicose accent of Revolutionary art that led from the austere heroics of David's *Bara* to the explicit messianism of Gros's *La Bataille d'Eylau* via the 'fou' fantasy of Girodet's *Ossian recevant les officiers de Napoléon* in 1802, these ceremonies seem like so many stepping stones towards the cult of Napoleon.¹³⁸ Like the trend in architecture fashion that progressed from

¹³⁶ For details of the procession, see the *Ordre de la Marche et des cérémonies qui seront observées au Champ de Mars, le 20 prairial pour la fête funéraire ordonnée par le Corps Législatif en mémoire des Ministres plénipotentiaires de la République assassinés près de Rastadt, le 9 floréal par les troupes autrichiennes*, (Paris, s.d.) B. N. Lb42/2211. For Chénier's lengthy attack on 'la barbarie autrichienne', and other denunciations of the allied 'anthrophages', see M.-J. Chénier, *Discours prononcé par M.-J. Chénier de l'Institut Nationale à la cérémonie funèbre au Champ de Mars le 20 prairial an VII...*, (Paris, an VII) B. N. Lb42/697, p. 17, Gourdan, *Discours prononcé par Gourdan, président du Conseil des Anciens, séance du 20 prairial an VII*, (Paris, an VII) B. N. Le45/1645, p. 8, and 'Discours prononcé dans le temple de la Reconnaissance, le 5 prairial an VII, par le citoyen Dubroca', A. N. F/1cI/24, no. 308, p. 8.

¹³⁷ See, for example, Leith, *Space and Revolution*, chapter 8, and Jourdan, 'Du sacre du philosophe au sacre du militaire: les Grands Hommes et la Révolution', *R. H. M. C.* vol. 39, (1992) pp. 403-22.

¹³⁸ For David's description of Girodet's bizarre adaptation of Ossianic myth to the glorification of French generals, see Delécluze, *David, Son École et son Temps*, (Paris, 1983 ed.), p. 266.

1796's call for memorials celebrating 'nos combats et nos victoires' to the erection of the First Consul's self-aggrandising statue of Desaix in vendémiaire year IX, these spectacles, with their pronounced emphasis on 'gloire and 'victoire' seem like the last gasps of a political culture increasingly in thrall to its generals.¹³⁹ And, in many senses, they are precisely that. Just as the Directory became ever more dependent upon the army to enforce its political will and expand its treasury, so Revolutionary culture increasingly came to articulate the values of the soldier and the virtue of conquest in the years after the Terror.

And yet, to look on these ceremonies as merely a prelude to the cult of Napoleon, or to assume that the 'sacre du militaire' only began after the Terror risks underestimating the extent to which Revolutionary commemoration and indeed, Revolutionary culture as a whole, had always contained a marked military dimension.¹⁴⁰ The axiom 'tout citoyen est soldat' had been a commonplace of constitutional debate from the summer of 1789 onwards, and this particularly Rousseauist ideal of the citizen ready to take up arms to defend the fatherland had found ample expression in the earliest Revolutionary commemorations.¹⁴¹ From the grenadier's bonnet and soldier's helmet that adorned the *vainqueurs*' cenotaph in the church of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet in August 1789 to the tributes paid to the 'braves guerriers morts à Nancy' the next year, the commemoration of the *citoyen-soldat* had, in one form or another, been a recurring feature of the Revolution's rites of memory from the very beginning. In peacetime, of course, there were few occasions to honour this particular type of Revolutionary hero, but with the declaration of war in April 1792, this changed dramatically. Indeed, campaigning had scarcely begun when the Revolution's first war-memorial appeared on the Champ de Mars during 1792's Federation, although at this early stage of the war, the

¹³⁹ For the concours of an IV, see Benezech, *Appel aux Artistes*, (Paris, an IV) For a selection of similar proposals from the year IV, see Daubermesnil, *Rapport sur les honneurs à rendre aux guerriers morts les armes à la main, le 5 thermidor an IV*, (Paris, an IV) p. 6, and the plan to build a massive marble war-memorial in Paris in *Projet de résolution sur les honneurs à rendre aux défenseurs de la patrie... au nom d'une commission composée des représentants du peuple, Eschassériaux, Duval, Daracq, Savary, Lakanal et Daubmesnil*, (Paris, an IV) B. L. F. R. 371, no. 37.

¹⁴⁰ Jourdan, 'Du sacre du philosophe au sacre du militaire'.

¹⁴¹ Sieyès, *Préliminaire de la constitution: reconnaissance et exposition raisonné des droits de l'homme et du citoyen*, (Versailles, 1789) p. 31. For a similar line, see Dubois-Crancé's claim in December 1789 that 'tout citoyen doit être soldat, et tout soldat citoyen'. A. P. vol. x, p. 521.

Commune's 'cénotaphe antique' remained something of a rarity.¹⁴² However, as hopes of a quick victory faded and the casualty figures mounted, the remembrance of the nation's war-dead came to occupy an increasingly central rôle in Revolutionary ritual, until by the spring of 1794, the commemoration of the citizen-soldier was at the forefront of the Convention's campaign of cultural mobilisation for war.

The militarization of Revolutionary remembrance began in earnest in *an II*. The heroic deeds of French soldiers and sailors were regularly acclaimed in the Convention, by Barère in particular, and plans for memorials 'en l'honneur des guerriers morts pour la patrie', were repeatedly made, though rarely realised, most notably during the great *concours* of floréal *an II*.¹⁴³ The *concours*' cenotaphs, however, like David's earlier plans for a pyramid inscribed with the names of those who had died during the defence of Lille in 1792, came to nothing.¹⁴⁴ A lack of cash, and more decisively, a change of political heart after Thermidor put paid to the Convention's plans for cenotaphs and pyramids, although its attempts to commemorate the citizen-soldier in print did prove rather more successful. Speeches and engravings extolling the virtues of ordinary French soldiers were widely circulated throughout the year II, and while they reached a wide public, the exaltation of the *citoyen-soldat* reached new heights with the launch of the Committee of Public Instruction's *Recueil des Actions Héroïques et Civiques des Républicains Français* in frimaire *an II*. Conceived as 'un faisceau des vertus républicaines', the *Recueil* was undoubtedly the most ambitious cog in the Convention's propaganda machine.¹⁴⁵ Recounting the heroics of men such as Etienne Brisson who died at Saumur crying: 'Je meurs, mais je ne mourrai pas sans vengeance' and women such as the heroine of Saint-Milhier, it was envisaged as both an encouragement to recruitment and a means

¹⁴² *L'Ordre et la marche du cortège de la Fédération du 14 juillet 1792...*, (Paris, 1792) p. 6.

¹⁴³ See, for example, Barère, *Rapport fait au nom du Comité de Salut Public sur l'héroïsme des républicains montant le vaisseau de Vengeur*, (Paris, an II) and for the cenotaph envisioned by the *concours* of an II, see Aulard, *C. S. P.* vol. xiii, p. 26. For a selection of the designs submitted to the *concours*, see W. Szambien, *Les Projets de l'an II: concours d'architecture de la période révolutionnaire*, (Paris, 1986).

¹⁴⁴ The erection of 'une pyramide ou un obélisque en granit français' in honour of 'le courage, le désintéressement, l'héroïsme, le généreux patriotisme des valeureux et intrépides citoyens de la ville de Lille' was the subject of David's maiden speech in the Convention on the 26th of October 1792. Wildenstein, *Documents Complémentaires au catalogue de l'œuvre de Louis David* p. 44.

¹⁴⁵ Thibaudeau, *Rapport au nom du Comité d'Instruction Publique sur la rédaction du recueil des actions héroïques des Républicains Français*, (Paris, an II) p. 3.

of carrying the commemoration of ordinary soldiers and civilians into clubs and households throughout the Republic.¹⁴⁶

More cynically, the Committees may well have created this anthology of incredibly audacious exploits in order to give the *sans-culottes* something edifying to think about as they watched their political influence evaporate and their sons march off to war, but if so, it is difficult to gauge their success. Indeed, it is almost impossible to know how the *Recueil* was read and received by its intended audience. It certainly had its critics, and the *Révolutions de Paris* for one lambasted the 'sèche et ennuyeuse' editing that mingled thrilling reports of patriotic self-sacrifice with songs about saltpetre, but with a print-run of 150,000 and many Jacobin clubs ordering hundreds of copies for local distribution, the *Recueil* still remained a formidable weapon in the Convention's propaganda arsenal.¹⁴⁷ However, whether the *Recueil* was intended to promote recruitment or to pacify the *sans-culoterrie*, and in all probability, it was designed to do both, its real significance lies in the insight it casts into the interaction between central government, the Jacobin clubs and the communities they represented in the commemoration of the nation's war-dead in *an II*. While the Committee of Public Instruction compiled the *Recueil*, the reports on which it was based came primarily from Jacobin clubs throughout the Republic, and as a result, the *Recueil*'s success depended on the clubs' eagerness to acclaim their localities' contribution to the Revolutionary cause.¹⁴⁸ Doubtless, some of this enthusiasm was inspired by the *clubistes*' wish to conform, but much of it also corresponded to a genuine desire to commemorate their dead. While the Convention provided the occasion to celebrate the heroism of the *citoyen-soldat*, the real impetus to commemorate the nation's war-dead came from the clubs.

¹⁴⁶ According to Thibaudeau, the *Recueil* was designed to be both 'une occasion journalière d'émulation et... une monument glorieuse.' Ibid. For the two examples cited, see the *Recueil des Actions Héroïques et Civiques des Républicains Français*, no. ii, p. 17, and no. iii, p. 25.

¹⁴⁷ *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 223, 16 pluviôse, an II, p. 472. For the *Recueil*'s print-run, see the 'Extrait de l'Arrête du Comité de Salut Public, du 28 pluviôse, an II' in the *Recueil*, no. IV, floréal an II, p. 4. For the clubs' subscriptions, see, for example, the order for 300 copies submitted in January 1794 by the *société des sans-culottes d'Avallon*. Tartat, *Avallon au XVIIIe siècle*, vol. ii, p. 116.

¹⁴⁸ An appeal was launched by the Committee in nivôse *an II* for details concerning 'les traits et actions héroïques dont le souvenir mérite d'être conservé', and while many such reports arrived from the local authorities and army units, the majority were sent in by Jacobin clubs. *Journal Militaire*, vol. ii, 347.

Almost everywhere, it was the Jacobins and *sociétaires* who took the lead in commemorating the *défenseur de la patrie* during the Terror. Few incidents illustrate this more clearly than the petition that thirty-three members of Châteaudun's *société populaire* dispatched to the Convention in brumaire an II.¹⁴⁹ For too long, the *sociétaires* insisted, glory had been the preserve of the victorious general, and it was high time that the ordinary soldier should receive his share of the honours of war along with the risks. To this end, they proposed that every commune in the land should raise some form of memorial, it did not really matter what, in honour of the young men who had given their lives for the Republic. In one sense, this petition seems little more than an amalgam of two of the provincial clubs' abiding obsessions, their fixation with military matters and their preoccupation with propaganda. Like the collections of boots, bandages and saltpetre that formed such a staple of Jacobin activity throughout the Terror and the club's simultaneous campaign to recruit Jacobin cavaliers, Châteaudun's call for columns and cenotaphs was very much in keeping with the crusading *civisme* of the year II.¹⁵⁰ And yet, while the *clubistes*' concerns conformed to type, they also went well beyond simply repairing an affront to the sacred principle of equality or easing the task of the recruiting officer. On the contrary, the *clubistes* felt betrayed and the tone of their petition was unusually bitter, for they spoke in the name of outraged decency as well as offended idealism. Imagining the ghosts of fallen soldiers rising up amongst them, the petitioners heard 'les voix plaintives' of the dead accusing the Republic of a cruel neglect:

les noms de chacun de nous sont ignorés, aucun monument ne nous rappelle au souvenir.
Citoyens, notre mort doit-elle être éternelle?

In order to appease those restless shades, Châteaudun's *clubistes* insisted that each town's monument should be inscribed with the names of 'ses enfants morts pour la défense de la République'. Certainly, they believed that this august sight would inspire young men to volunteer, but encouraging enlistment was not their sole concern, for they hoped that such monuments would offer some comfort to those left behind: 'en lisant le nom de son fils, le vieillard trouvera des consolations, il se dira, "mon fils a emporté les regrets de ses compatriotes".' The Convention awarded

¹⁴⁹ *Adresse de la société populaire de Châteaudun... le 16 brumaire an II*, A. N. F17a/1007, no. 1217.

¹⁵⁰ For Châteaudun's particularly aggressive recruitment drive in the spring of an II, see M. Kennedy, 'Jacobin Cavalrymen', *F. H. S.* vol. xvii, (1992) pp. 670-87, p. 683.

Châteaudun's petition a 'mention honorable', passed it on to the *Comité d'Instruction Publique* and the club's call came to nothing.¹⁵¹

The Convention never implemented Châteaudun's suggestion, anymore than it had acted on an identical proposal from Verdun's Jacobins a few weeks before, but as bad news began to arrive from the front in towns and villages across France, many other Jacobins took matters into their own hands.¹⁵² Reims' *société populaire* was one of the first to raise such a memorial. Already in May 1793, the *sociétaires* had begun to compile a list of 'nos frères morts pour la défense de la Patrie' with a view to inscribing their names on a commemorative pyramid. By early August, the list was complete and the pyramid in place, ready to be unveiled during the city's *fête de la Réunion*, atop the pedestal previously occupied by Pigalle's statue of Louis XV on the former *place Royale*.¹⁵³ Reims' initiative was unusually early, but as the year progressed and the *levée en masse* gradually brought the war into every corner of the Republic, so similar monuments began to appear in streets and squares throughout France. In the Côtes-du-Nord for instance, Saint-Brieuc's popular society consecrated a 'cenotaphe' in pluviôse *an II* in honour of several local men who had died fighting in the Vendée, and in the Drôme a few months later, Tain's *sociétaires* followed Reims' example and inscribed the names of their dead on a pyramid in the town centre.¹⁵⁴ By the end of the Terror, imposing obelisks had also appeared in Valence and on Suresnes' *place d'Armes*, although such expenditure was clearly beyond the means of many smaller societies.¹⁵⁵ The less affluent clubs, like Artonne's, had to make do with commissioning plaques inscribed with 'les noms des martyrs de la liberté à qui la commune a donné le jour', while the *société républicaine* of tiny Cucuron had to settle for planting a tree in honour of the locals 'qui ont péri au siège de Toulon' in nivôse *an II*.¹⁵⁶ Many such memorials were raised over the course of *an II*, but even the absence of a monument cannot always be ascribed to the indifference that Châteaudun's *clubistes* decried. Lunéville's Jacobins, for example,

¹⁵¹ A. P. vol. lxxx, p. 139.

¹⁵² For Verdun's demand that 'dans chaque commune il soit élevé sur la principale place un colonne sur laquelle seront incrits les noms des citoyens morts pour la patrie', see A. P. vol. 75, p. 510.

¹⁵³ J.-P. Bertaud, *La Révolution Armée: les soldats-citoyens et la Révolution française*, (Paris, 1979) p. 211 and P. Tarbé, *Reims, ses rues et ses monuments*, (Reims, 1844) pp. 178-80.

¹⁵⁴ A. P. vol. 85, p. 633-6 and *Journal de la Montagne*, no. 52, 30 prairial *an II*, p. 424.

¹⁵⁵ Bertaud, *La Révolution Armée*, p. 211, and Leith, *Space and Revolution*, p. 306.

¹⁵⁶ Martin, *Les Jacobins du village*, p. 227, and for the commemorative cypress in the Vaucluse, *Journal Républicain de la Commune Sans-Nom, ci-devant Marseille*, no. 53, 2 pluviôse *an II*, p. 438.

raised no cenotaph in *an II*, but when news of Dominique Diettmann's death reached the town in March 1794, their first response was to send a delegation offering their sympathy and what support they could to his family, to drape their hall in mourning and to prepare an *éloge funèbre* in his memory.¹⁵⁷

From planting cypresses and unveiling cenotaphs to staging memorials and donning mourning, the Jacobins' commemoration of the Republic's war-dead took many forms throughout the Terror. Perhaps more importantly, the emotions these ceremonies unleashed in *an II* were just as wide-ranging, and in this respect, the clubs' commemorative endeavours were qualitatively quite different from the speeches that honoured the soldiers' sacrifice in the Convention. With the exception of the few deputies who died on mission, the *conventionnels* had little direct knowledge of the dead, and while they regularly acclaimed the heroism of fallen French soldiers with stirring speeches and promises of enduring monuments, they did not really mourn them.¹⁵⁸ In the Convention, the dead and the wounded were shadowy figures, 'statues vivantes', as one deputy described the mutilated unfortunates who returned from the front, signifying the sacrifices required by an embattled Republic, and their commemoration was calculated chiefly to persuade others to take their place.¹⁵⁹ However, in the towns and villages that raised these memorials, the *clubistes* knew precisely who the dead were. They were local men, friends, neighbours and very often fellow Jacobins, and as a result, the commemoration of their memory was a much more complex matter for the *clubistes* than it ever could be for the *conventionnels*.¹⁶⁰ For the deputies, commemoration was, in effect, a ceremonial counterpoint to the *levée en masse*, but for the clubs, these cenotaphs and the ceremonies that accompanied their unveiling expressed a sense of

¹⁵⁷ H. Baumont, 'La société populaire de Lunéville, 1793-1795', *Annales de l'Est*, vol. iii, (1889) pp. 337-76, p. 371.

¹⁵⁸ Barère's tribute to the crew of the *Vengeur* is typical of these glib accolades: 'Ne plaignons pas les Français composant l'équipage du Vengeur, ne les plaignons pas: ils sont morts pour la patrie'. Barère, *Rapport fait au nom du Comité de Salut Public sur l'héroïsme des républicains montant le vaisseau de Vengeur*, (Paris, an II) p. 5.

¹⁵⁹ Wounded soldiers were regularly received in the Convention where they were generally awarded the honour of a 'baiser fraternel' from the president. For one of the earliest such instances see the reception afforded Louis-François Lavigne in March 1793. *A. P.* vol. ix, p. 350.

¹⁶⁰ The post that brought word of the death of Pierre Thiat's son to Artonne's Jacobins also carried news that one of the club's members, Jean Brunier, had been wounded in action. Martin, *Les Jacobins du village*, p. 227.

loss as well as an urge to inspire and called for consolation as often as they cried 'aux armes'.

In the Convention, and in the governing committees in particular, commemorating the soldiers of the year II was primarily a question of encouraging enlistment and reassuring the public that, despite its losses, the Republic would ultimately prevail. In the clubs, by contrast, the remembrance of the Revolution's war-dead collapsed the distinction between the political needs of a nation at war and the moral obligations of communities in mourning in a way that no other civic ceremony could. The indignation of Châteaudun's call for monuments to honour 'ses enfants morts' illustrates this clearly, and the frontier between political propaganda and private grief was just as uncertain in the ceremonies that took place in town squares and club *salles de séances* throughout the year II. At the unveiling of Saint-Brieuc's memorial, for example, citizen Huette devoted the bulk of his address to acclaiming the Republic's impending victory over the combined forces of royalism and religious fanaticism, but while 'le sang de vos frères' cried out for 'vengeance' throughout his speech, it would be simplistic to imagine that this was just another Jacobin rallying cry.¹⁶¹ However much the sight of this cenotaph was meant to mobilise the town's youth to 'concourir à consolider la République', its inauguration was also a moment for mourning, and Huette's speech acknowledged 'la douleur, la reconnaissance... l'effusion de nos coeurs' that had brought a 'grand concours de citoyens et citoyennes' together for the occasion. Indeed, with family and friends of the fallen among the crowd on the 20th of pluviôse, the 'pleurs' and 'regrets' that pervaded this 'touchant spectacle' may well have overshadowed the more obviously propagandist aspects of the ceremony. They certainly existed alongside them, because for many of those present, Huette's claim that 'nous avons perdus des frères' was as much a recognition of grim reality as it was an expression of Republican fraternity. Saint-Brieuc's cenotaph constituted, therefore, both a call to arms and a sign of the community's sympathy for, and solidarity with, the bereaved, and a similar combination of seemingly contradictory sentiments is apparent throughout these commemorations. In some cases, of course, the *clubistes'* emphasis in raising these monuments was less on providing solace for grieving families than on encouraging enlistment among the men who remained

¹⁶¹ Huette, 'Discours funèbre prononcé par le président de la société populaire de Saint-Brieuc, 20 pluviôse an II', A. P. vol. 85, pp. 633-5.

behind, but even then, their motives remained mixed. In prairial *an II*, for example, Tain's Jacobins proudly informed Paris that their new memorial would 'augmenter, s'il est possible, l'ardeur et le dévouement des intrépides défenseurs de la patrie', but even this rather utilitarian rationale was tempered by the claim that the names it bore had been 'gravés... par les mains de l'amour et de la reconnaissance'.¹⁶²

The words *amour* and *reconnaissance* are, of course, easily uttered. And yet, in communities where the Revolution's heroes were no longer merely names read in the newspapers or portraits etched on cheap prints, the significance of these words cannot be readily dismissed, especially as they frequently translated into a very active concern for the welfare of those left widowed and orphaned by the war. Sometimes, as at Lunéville, this amounted to no more than a club promising to place the orphaned son of a local hero 'sous sa protection spéciale', but elsewhere, such expressions of symbolic solidarity were often accompanied by more substantial measures of support.¹⁶³ From impromptu whip-rounds to the systematic provision of relief for soldiers' families across entire cities, the plight of the 'mères et enfants des citoyens qui ont pris les armes pour la défense de la République' occupied the clubs constantly throughout the Terror.¹⁶⁴ With so many *clubistes* either enlisted themselves or with sons and brothers in uniform, these measures probably owed as much to a sense of communal self-help as they did to any more exalted notions of civic duty, but whatever their precise motives, these schemes attest to the variety of commitments that commemoration entailed for the clubs. A political opportunity, a moral obligation and a social responsibility at one and the same time, the remembrance of the Republic's war-dead was, perhaps above all else, a personal affair. A club's minute book can never fully express what the loss of a local boy meant to its members, but in a village like Artonne, where everybody knew everybody else and where many *clubistes* already had family at the front, the death of Pierre Thiat's son

¹⁶² *Journal de la Montagne*, no. 52, 30 prairial an II, p. 424.

¹⁶³ Baumont, 'La société populaire de Lunéville', p. 371.

¹⁶⁴ Some examples may serve to illustrate the range of activities covered by the clubs' concern for the welfare of soldiers' dependants. By early 1793, both Bordeaux's *Récollets* and Aix's *Antipolitiques* were distributing over 1,500 *livres* a month to support local volunteers' families, and that September, Semur's Jacobins created a special commission of six, composed of both men and women, 'chargé de faire la répartition aux mères et enfants des citoyens qui ont pris les armes pour la défense de la République'. In a similar initiative, Rouen's *clubistes* took charge of the weekly distribution of box-office receipts donated by the town's Jacobin impresario, Ribié, for the welfare of the widowed and orphaned. Kennedy, *The Jacobin Clubs*, vol. ii, p. 137, Henriot, *Les Jacobins de Semur*, p. 318, and Chardin, ed. *Cahiers des Procès-verbaux de la société populaire de Rouen*, p. 157.

was a genuine tragedy and the decision to inscribe his name 'en caractères ineffaçables' was a matter of some pride and real regret.¹⁶⁵ For these *clubistes* and for their kind throughout the Terror, the remembrance of the Republic's war-dead wove the modern politics of patriotism and the customary values of community and kinship together in an intricate weave of ideology and emotion. However, just as Artonne's Jacobins' first response to the death of Pierre Thiat's son was to offer what comfort they could to his father, so the claims of kith and kin frequently claimed priority over those of the *patrie*.

The sequence of events that followed the arrival of the first casualty reports in Artonne's club illustrates the range of emotions that commemorating the *défenseur de la patrie* inspired among the Jacobins of the year II. Artonne's example is, however, revealing in another respect because, unlike Reims' pyramid and Saint-Brieuc's cenotaph, its commemorative plaque was never put in place. Pierre Thiat's son died in vendémiaire *an III*, and within a matter of weeks, Artonne's Jacobin club had simply ceased to exist. Like hundreds of other clubs across France, it stopped meeting over the course of winter, and its final closure the following spring was little more than a formality. The collapse of the Jacobin club network over the winter of the year III called a halt to these spontaneous acts of commemoration, but perhaps more importantly, it also signalled an end to the celebration of ordinary soldiers like Pierre Thiat's son. After Thermidor, there would be no more unprompted initiatives in honour of these unexceptional casualties of war, because by the middle of *an III*, there were no clubs left to organise them, and, just as importantly, no political appetite in Paris for honouring such undistinguished heroes.

The first indication of this shift in the new régime's commemorative priorities came within a few months of Robespierre's fall when an insignificant little 'urne funéraire' was unveiled in the *Jardin National* in memory of the men who had died 'en

¹⁶⁵ Artonne's club was dominated by the Nony, Arnaud and Gervy clans, all of whom had family members in the army to judge by the frequent correspondence the club received from the front. Martin, *Les Jacobins du village*, p. 227.

défendant la patrie.¹⁶⁶ Of the three commemorations that ushered in the year III, the concluding act of the *Fête des Victoires* was undoubtedly the most unobtrusive. Slotted in between military manoeuvres and a 'marche triomphale' on the Champ de Mars and the start of dances all over the city, the inauguration of this mean 'petit monument' seemed out of place, an unnecessary intrusion of solemnity in the midst of celebration, and it went largely unnoticed as a result. All but ignored by the press and largely unattended by the public, this shabby little ceremony was something of an anomaly, but more tellingly, it was also an afterthought.¹⁶⁷ There had been no mention of honouring the fallen in Chénier's first report on the *fête des Victoires* on 7 vendémiaire, or in Bourdon's response to it, or in Merlin de Thionville's speech on 'des fêtes nationales' later that same day.¹⁶⁸ They were all too busy denouncing the 'despotisme capricieux' of the dead tyrant to pay any heed to the men who had made victory even imaginable, and the first reference to raising a memorial in honour of the 'guerriers morts en défendant la patrie' only appeared when preparations for the festival were finalised three weeks later.¹⁶⁹ In their anxiety to claim credit for the victories another régime had won, the thermidorians had first forgotten the men whose lives had secured those victories, and then, belatedly, afforded them the scant recognition of a paltry plaster monument in an inconspicuous corner of a public park. In so doing, they set the tone for the cynicism and the neglect of the years to come.

The remembrance of 'nos braves défenseurs' remained, as Daubermesnil argued in thermidor *an IV*, 'un devoir' after the Terror, but as the commemorative initiative passed from the clubs to the Ministries, that duty was progressively stripped of the moral and social resonance it had possessed for the *clubistes* of the year II.¹⁷⁰ The

¹⁶⁶ Chénier, *Rapport sur la fête des Victoires qui doit être célébrée le décadi 30 vendémiaire l'an III... fait à la Convention Nationale... le 27 vendémiaire...*, (Paris, an III) p. 6.

¹⁶⁷ In otherwise quite detailed reports on the *fête des Victoires*, the ceremony in the Jardin National received hardly any attention in the press, and several newspapers ignored it completely. Similarly, Guittard de Floriban recorded the mock battle on the Champs de Mars in his diary, but made no mention of the service in the Jardin National. Aulard, *Paris pendant la réaction*, vol. i, pp. 189-92, and *Journal d'un bourgeois de Paris*, p. 460.

¹⁶⁸ Chénier, *Rapport fait à la Convention Nationale au nom du Comité d'Instruction Publique... par Marie-Joseph Chénier... le 7 vendémiaire an 3^e de la République*, (Paris, an III) and A. M. no. 374, 8 vendémiaire an III, p. 42, and *Opinion de Merlin sur les fêtes nationales prononcée à la Convention Nationale dans la séance du 7 vendémiaire an 3^e de la République*, (Paris, an III)

¹⁶⁹ *Rapport fait à la Convention... le 7 vendémiaire...*, p. 3 and Chénier, *Rapport sur la fête des Victoires qui doit être célébrée le décadi 30 vendémiaire l'an III... fait à la Convention Nationale... le 27 vendémiaire...*, (Paris, an III) p. 6.

¹⁷⁰ Daubermesnil, *Rapport sur les honneurs à rendre aux guerriers morts les armes à la main*, (Paris, an IV) B. L. F1085, no. 15, p. 3.

commemoration of the Republic's war-dead became instead a purely political affair; a matter for Ministerial instructions and official invitations, military exercises and, as Jones has remarked, 'robotic procès-verbaux'.¹⁷¹ Remembrance became, under the Directory, the preserve of a political and bureaucratic elite with the result that it was increasingly reserved for the select few, the generals like Hoche and Joubert whose careers had brought both glory and booty in their wake, and whose deaths could be made to serve an equally practical purpose. Their deaths meant something because, as François de Neufchâteau informed his underlings, 'le cendre d'un héros en fait naître mille autres', but the death of an unknown private or an undistinguished corporal conferred no such benefits upon the Directory's beleaguered political elite.¹⁷² While the Directory honoured its generals with 'simple, majesteuse et touchante' ceremonies on the Champ de Mars and commended them for, as Garat put it, both 'des grands services rendues à l'humanité' and 'le vast carnage' their armies had inflicted upon the 'barbares', the men they led were rarely acclaimed and never mourned in the Councils and the Ministries.¹⁷³ Their deaths could never be made to 'réveiller l'enthousiasme qui fait éclore des soldats et donne des aspirans nombreux à l'immortalité', and in the absence of any more substantial claim to fame, their dying went largely unheeded in the corridors of power.¹⁷⁴ Promises were repeatedly made, of course, to raise memorials, marble monuments and bronze 'livres de gloire' in memory of the Republic's war-dead, but those promises never amounted to anything, any more than the Directory's military funerals ever aspired to honour anyone other than a handful of victorious generals.¹⁷⁵

There was no place for the routine casualty of war and no time for mourning in the Directory's rites of remembrance because the routine cannot 'électriser le peuple' and mourning does not leave its spectators 'brûlants de la soif de la vengeance et de la

¹⁷¹ P. M. Jones, *Liberty and Locality in Revolutionary France*, (Cambridge, 2003) p. 159.

¹⁷² 'Le Ministre de l'Intérieur aux administrations centrales', A. N. F/1cI/113, no. 89.

¹⁷³ *La Décade Philosophique*, 20 vendémiaire an VI, p. 110 and Garat, 'Éloge du général Joubert' in *Procès-verbal de la cérémonie funèbre en mémoire du Général Joubert*, (Paris, s.d.) B. N. Lb42/2511, pp. 5 and 30.

¹⁷⁴ Daubermesnil, *Motion d'Ordre sur les moyens de vivifier l'esprit public...*, (Paris, an IV) B. L. F. R. 371, no. 34, p. 8.

¹⁷⁵ For a selection of such proposed monuments, see *ibid.* and F. L. Aubry, *Projet d'un monument à la gloire des défenseurs de la patrie*, (Douai, an V)

victoire'.¹⁷⁶ This might seem a rather jaundiced conclusion to draw in the light of the sobs that punctuated La Revellière-Lépeaux's eulogy of Hoche or the tremulous tributes afforded Joubert in *an VIII*, but it is difficult not to be sceptical of such outpourings when the Directors never saw fit to extend them to the vast majority of the Republic's dead.¹⁷⁷ It is even harder to take these overwrought sentiments at face value when even the commanders of *ancien régime* armies received more recognition from the Councils than the ordinary citizen-soldier. While it was left to the first Consul to install Louis XIV's greatest general in splendour in *les Invalides* in vendémiaire year IX, the Revolutionary mobilisation of Turenne's memory had, in reality, begun long before.¹⁷⁸ Already in August 1796, the Directory had decided to incorporate 'cet homme illustre' into the Revolutionary patrimony when it resolved to undo the affront to 'l'honneur national' that had wrenched Turenne's coffin from Saint-Denis in 1793 only to leave it perched ignominiously between an embalmed elephant and a stuffed rhinoceros in the *Jardin des Plantes*.¹⁷⁹ Warned that this rather inglorious resting place might somehow 'diminuer quelque chose de votre suprême gloire', the Directory took immediate action and moved this 'objet d'intérêt national' to Lenoir's *Musée des Monuments Français*, where it remained until Napoleon staked his own claim to a share in Turenne's triumphs in vendémiaire year IX.¹⁸⁰ This rather desperate attempt to latch onto the legacy of the *Grand Siècle* is only the most extreme example of the Directory's overriding obsession with extracting every last ounce of reflected glory from the memory of fallen French heroes. It was an

¹⁷⁶ 'Rapport présenté au Ministre de l'Intérieur, le 30 floréal an VII', A. N. F17/1232, no. 12 and 'Le Ministre de l'Intérieur aux Administrations centrales et municipales, le 2 prairial an VII', A. N. F/1cI/113. Although these directives concerned the commemoration of the plenipotentiaries assassinated by the Austrians at Rastadt, they apply equally readily to the Directory's commemoration of its other war-dead.

¹⁷⁷ La Revellière-Lépeaux, *Discours prononcé à la cérémonie funèbre exécutée en mémoire du général Hoche, au Champ de Mars, le 10 vendémiaire an 6*, (Paris, an VI) For La Revellière's emotional delivery of this éloge, see the *Procès-verbal de la Cérémonie funèbre qui a eu lieu au Champ de Mars, à Paris, le 10 vendémiaire an VI en mémoire du général Hoche*, (Paris, an VI) p. 6.

¹⁷⁸ For Turenne's installation in *Les Invalides*, see Aulard, *Paris sous le Consulat*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1903-9) vol. i, p. 667.

¹⁷⁹ A. M. no. 323, 23 thermidor an IV, p. 379.

¹⁸⁰ A. Debidour ed. *Recueil des Actes du Directoire Exécutif: (Procès-verbaux, arrêtés, instructions, lettres et actes divers)*, 4 vols. (Paris 1910-17) vol. iii, p. 255. For Turenne's temporary refuge in the *Musée*, see A. Lenoir, *Description Historique et chronologique des Monumens de sculpture réunis au Musée des Monumens Français...*, (Paris, 1806) p. 211 Once installed there, Turenne's tomb provided the setting for several Republican ceremonies. In thermidor year VII, for example, a delegation from the Ain gathered before Turenne's tomb to celebrate Joubert as his worthy successor, declaring, that 'Donner des larmes à Joubert dans un lieu où tout bon français en verse encore pour Turenne après un siècle, y prononcer son nom, c'est en faire le plus bel éloge.' *Honneurs funèbres rendus au général Joubert par les citoyens de son département...*, (Paris, s.d.) B. N. Lb42/772, p. 2.

obsession that effectively excluded the commemoration of the common soldier just as it ignored the plight of the families he left behind, and it is to those families, and successive régimes' attempts to provide for them, that we must now turn in order to understand what the militarization of Revolutionary remembrance amounted to in practice.

To bring the commemoration of the dead down to a question of cold, hard cash may seem like a crudely reductionist approach to a such a complex question, and perhaps it is. However, in the absence of any lasting memorial to the *citoyen-soldat*, and in view of the ulterior motives that so frequently informed the commemoration of 'nos braves défenseurs', the care of the widows and orphans the war created constitutes one way of understanding what *la patrie reconnaissante* amounted to in reality. For if this expression was to mean anything other than the crude propaganda and cardboard cenotaphs that characterised so many Republican commemorations, then providing for the welfare of those widowed and orphaned by the war had to lie at the heart of Revolutionary remembrance. Of course, it might be objected that this perspective risks imposing a twentieth century model of social solidarity onto an eighteenth century that knew little of the welfare state, and in a sense, it does. However, it is also to look at commemoration through the eyes of the Parisians who insisted in July 1789 that because so many of the *vainqueurs*' families were threatened by 'l'indigence la plus absolue' because a husband or father had died for the *patrie*, then 'la patrie leur doit donc des secours.'¹⁸¹ The prosaic matter of widows' pensions may seem a far cry from the stirring speeches on the Champ de Mars and the brash triumphalism of the Republic's successive *concours*, but in reality, the remembrance of the Revolution's dead and the relief of the women and children they left behind had been inextricably intertwined from the very first.

In 1789, providing for the welfare of those widowed and orphaned by the fighting at the Bastille had been, as we have seen, one of Parisian public's first priorities in commemorating the *vainqueurs*' sacrifice. Collections for the families of the fallen

¹⁸¹ *Les Lauriers du fauxbourg Saint-Antoine*, (Paris, 1789) p. 6.

had figured prominently during the requiem masses that followed 14 July, and those collections were frequently accompanied by the claim that while private charity had a part to play in relieving the plight of the widowed and orphaned, the Assembly also had a debt to repay. It took the *Comité des Pensions* the best part of a year to honour this debt, but when the *vainqueurs'* pensions were finally paid in June 1790, they were presented to the public as a 'monument public de la reconnaissance... qui est dû à tous ceux qui ont fait triompher la liberté.'¹⁸² Admittedly, the sums involved hardly lived up to this extravagant billing. A widow's pension of 150 *livres* and an orphan's annual allowance of 100 *livres* did not represent a particularly imposing 'monument public', and these amounts paled in comparison to the 1,200 *livres* a year the deputies awarded Thérèse Levasseur later that winter, but even so, they established an important precedent.¹⁸³ Whether they were simple tradesmen's wives or the widow of the 'législateur de l'univers', the deputies accepted that it was their duty, in Barère's words, to ensure that the 'veuves des hommes qui ont servi la patrie' were not left 'en proie aux angoisses du besoin.'¹⁸⁴

Whether couched in the traditional terms of Christian charity or expressed in the more modern language of *bienfaisance nationale*, and these two vocabularies frequently converged in 1789, the principle that no family should be left destitute because of a husband or father's devotion to the *patrie* was fundamental to the moral economy of Revolutionary remembrance. It was, for both the public and the deputies alike, a relatively simple question of honouring the Revolution's debt to the dead, and the same sense of indebtedness extended to the victims of subsequent *journées*. In June 1791, the deputies conferred a range of pensions on those wounded, widowed and orphaned during the fighting at Nancy the previous August, and the following spring, Guillaume Simonneau's murder in Étampes prompted their successors in the Legislative to propose an annuity for the dead mayor's family, an offer which the well-heeled Madame Simonneau graciously declined as unnecessary.¹⁸⁵ In January 1793, a similar sense of responsibility led the Convention, again on Barère's

¹⁸² A. P. vol. xvi, p. 371.

¹⁸³ The payment details were finalised in December 1790. A. P. vol. xxi, p. 566.

¹⁸⁴ *Recueil des pièces relatives à la motion faite à l'Assemblée nationale au sujet de J. J. Rousseau et de sa veuve*, (Paris, 1791) pp. 12-3.

¹⁸⁵ The annuities awarded ranged from 100 *livres* for a Guardsman's orphan to 300 *livres* for the wives of two officers of the line killed during the fighting at Nancy. A. P. vol. xxvi, p. 756. For the Assembly's offer to Mme Simonneau and her response, see A. P. vols. xl, p. 100, and xli, p. 14.

prompting, to make Suzanne Lepeletier a ward of the Republic after her father's assassination.¹⁸⁶ Having inherited a fortune worth an estimated six million *livres*, Suzanne Lepeletier's adoption by the Convention admittedly cost the *patrie* nothing, but even so, this was no empty gesture. Successive assemblies took their duties *in loco parentis* seriously, especially in 1797 when the teenage heiress had the insensitivity to announce her intention to marry a foreigner, but this was as nothing compared to the responsibilities the Republic had already incurred in August 1792.¹⁸⁷

Six months before the *conventionnels* clasped the fabulously wealthy Suzanne Lepeletier to their collective bosom, August 10th had produced another cohort of widows and orphans in rather more desperate need of assistance, and both the public and the political elite were quick to respond to their plight. Provincial Jacobin clubs rapidly set about raising money for the families of the men who had died fighting in the Tuileries, and funds for the 'secours à des veuves affligées et à de pauvres orphelins' flooded into Paris in the weeks following the fall of the monarchy.¹⁸⁸ Having already decided on its own dissolution, the Legislative Assembly was unable to pass a fully-fledged pension bill to assist the bereaved, but on August 20th, it did release the sum of 20,000 *livres* to tide the widowed and orphaned over until their situation could be considered by the incoming Convention.¹⁸⁹ Given the pressing problems it faced that winter, the Convention's response to their predicament was remarkably swift and surprisingly wide-ranging. By Christmas 1792, a comprehensive system of relief for the widowed and wounded had been established, providing for everything from free thermal baths and daily allowances for the injured during their convalescence to lifetime annuities for the permanently disabled and the bereaved.¹⁹⁰ Once again, the sums involved were hardly breathtaking, but even so, the assurance that 'la grande famille' of the nation would take the place of the

¹⁸⁶ A. P. vol. lvii, p. 654.

¹⁸⁷ Suzanne's relatives opposed the match to a Dutch teenager, Jean de Witt, and appealed to her lawful guardians, the Conseils, to stop it. For the uproar that ensued, and the estimate of Suzanne's wealth, see the *Journal des Hommes Libres*, no. 191, 6 frimaire an VI, pp. 795-6, and the deputies' report on the matter in A. N. AD/II/107, no. 9. Whether this controversy contributed to her later conversion to royalism and her consequent decision to destroy David's portrait of her father is open to question.

¹⁸⁸ *Discours prononcé à la barre de l'Assemblée Nationale, au nom des citoyens et citoyennes de Passy, faisant offrande aux mânes des citoyens massacrés à la journée du 10 août 1792, pour secourir les veuves et orphelins de ces malheureuses victimes...*, (Paris, 1792) B. N. 4-Z Le Senne 1247. For the wider Jacobin relief campaign, see Kennedy, *The Jacobin clubs*, vol. ii, p. 283.

¹⁸⁹ A. P. vol. xlviii, p. 425.

¹⁹⁰ Beauvais, *Rapport sur les récompenses et indemnités à accorder aux veuves, pères, mères et enfants des citoyens tués et aux blessés dans la journée du 10 août par C. N. Beauvais*, (Paris, 1792)

husbands and fathers who had died on August 10th constituted a real commitment to discharging the Republic's debt towards 'les braves défenseurs de la liberté.'¹⁹¹

When the *défenseur de la liberté* became a *défenseur de la patrie*, that commitment remained essentially the same, even as the costs of meeting it escalated exponentially. After July 14th and August 10th, providing for the widows Poirier, Fiacre, and Homet had been a question of exceptional legislation and finite figures, but with the outbreak of war, the exceptional became the norm and the expense involved quickly became open-ended.¹⁹² The question of war-widows' pensions has normally been considered either in terms of the Revolution's impact on military life or as an offshoot of successive assemblies' attempts to tackle the problem of poverty in all its forms, and obviously, it was both of these things.¹⁹³ Over the course of the decade, the development of military pension policy mirrored both the changing place of the army in national politics and the broad evolution of official attitudes towards the poor, but it is also reflected the assemblies' will to remember their dead. Like the church collections raised for the *vainqueurs*' families and the clubs' donations after August 10th, successive assemblies considered the care of the women and children left widowed and fatherless by the war to be as essential an element of honouring the dead as the speeches and ceremonies that celebrated their sacrifice. Even before the war began, the National Assembly had decided to include military widows in its planned reform of state provision for ex-servicemen, but during peacetime, this question remained relatively low on the Assembly's list of priorities and the terms of its decree were never finalised.¹⁹⁴ With the outbreak of hostilities however, the demands of mass mobilisation and the rapid radicalisation of political life transformed the National Assembly's ill-defined sense of moral obligation into an incontrovertible civil right. By June 1793, when the Convention enacted its pioneering pension legislation, it was recognised that the war-widow had 'des droits incontestables à la

¹⁹¹ Beauvais, *Rapport...*, pp. 5 and 3.

¹⁹² For the widows covered by the pension plans for the *vainqueurs* and the dead of Nancy, see A. P. vol. xxi, p. 566 and A. N. C/35/298¹, no. 1040. For the widow Homet's appeal for aid in August 1792, A. P. vol. xlviii, p. 425.

¹⁹³ Isser Woloch's work remains the fundamental point of reference for any discussion of welfare policy in the military sphere, while Alan Forrest has located the question of military pensions more broadly in terms of the Revolution's evolving attitudes to social policy. I. Woloch, 'War-widows pensions: social policy in revolutionary and Napoleonic France', *Societas*, vol. vi, (1976) pp. 235-54, and *The French veteran from the Revolution to the Restoration*, (Chapel Hill, 1979) and A. Forrest, *The French Revolution and the poor*, (Oxford, 1981) especially pp. 138-68.

¹⁹⁴ A. P. vol. 17, p. 573.

reconnaissance nationale', and that those rights amounted to a debt the nation was duty-bound to repay.¹⁹⁵

The scale of this debt remains difficult to assess. Regimental lists rarely recorded marital status, and while most soldiers were probably single, many were not. Indeed, Jean-Paul Bertaud has estimated, albeit from incomplete evidence, that up to half of those who volunteered in 1792 were married men, and this assessment is borne out by many contemporary artistic representations of the soldier's departure for the front.¹⁹⁶ Whether sentimentalised as a fond farewell to a wife and child, as in Isabey's *Le départ du volontaire* of 1794, or depicted as a scene of domestic desolation, as in Delarue's later and significantly bleaker *Le Sacrifice à la Patrie*, the soldier's leave-taking was commonly portrayed as a dislocation of family life.¹⁹⁷ For a generation of artists raised in David's shadow, and Delarue's compositional debt to the master is particularly striking, such scenes inevitably evoked the tension between patriotic duty and private sentiment that defined so much of David's work. However, if painters naturally gravitated towards the pathetic potential of the family separated by the call of the *patrie*, the decision to depict *le départ* in these terms was not simply an artistic device. Revolutionary artists regularly embroidered the facts, but they rarely fabricated them entirely, and the recurrence of this theme throughout the decade suggests that these images were grounded in an all too recognisable reality. In November 1792, opinion in the Convention was certainly convinced that 'lorsque les dangers de la patrie ont été proclamés, une multitude de pères de familles se sont consacrés à sa défense', and five years later, this impression still held good in the Councils.¹⁹⁸ Throughout the war, the deputies were acutely aware that a substantial proportion of *citoyens-soldats* were family men, and they were equally conscious that those families were, particularly after the first flush of enthusiastic volunteering

¹⁹⁵ Peltier, 'Rapport et projet de décret sur les pensions alimentaires et les secours à accorder aux veuves des militaires morts aux combats ou par suite des blessures...', A. P. vol. 66, p. 27.

¹⁹⁶ It should be noted that Bertaud's estimate is based on figures drawn from only one département. J.-P. Bertaud, *La Révolution armée: les soldats-citoyens et la Révolution Française*, (Paris, 1979) p. 82.

¹⁹⁷ Jean-Baptiste Isabey, *Le départ des volontaires*, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Orléans, and Julien Delarue, *Le Sacrifice à la Patrie, ou le départ du volontaire*, Musée Carnavalet, inv. no. D. 6156. For another portrayal of the soldier's departure from his family, albeit in the form of a classical allegory, see Jacques Gamelin's 1793 *Le départ d'Abradate pour le combat*, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Bordeaux.

¹⁹⁸ Maignet, *Rapport et projet de décret sur les secours à accorder aux pères, mères, femmes et enfants des citoyens-soldats volontaires qui sont dans le besoin, présentés au nom du Comité des secours publics*, (Paris, 1792) p. 1. Girot-Pouzol made an identical claim in late 1797: 'un grand nombre de Français ont quitté leurs femmes et leurs enfants pour voler à la défense de la patrie.' *Rapport fait par C. Girot-Pouzol, le 29 frimaire an VI*, (Paris, an VI) p. 2.

abated in 1792, seldom affluent enough to survive the death of a breadwinner unscathed.¹⁹⁹

This realisation, and the sense of responsibility that went with it, made the care of the *défenseurs'* dependants a matter of constant concern in the Convention. One of the few subjects that deputies as diverse as Marat and Vergniaud could agree upon, the Republic's debt towards its defenders' families was the subject of no fewer than twelve separate laws up to thermidor *an II*.²⁰⁰ May 1793 saw the enactment of legislation to assist soldiers' families in need, and the following month, a comprehensive war-widow's pension scheme was finally introduced.²⁰¹ In fixing the widow's pension on a scale between 150 and 1,000 *livres*, depending on the deceased's rank and length of service, the terms of this law were reasonably liberal, but as the year II progressed, those terms were subject to constant adjustment upwards.²⁰² Dismissed as 'trop modiques' by Robespierre, the annuities awarded soldiers' families were increased by a third in nivôse on the grounds that 'tout acte de bienfaisance envers l'armée est un acte de reconnaissance nationale', and another battery of reforms was introduced in pluviôse to ensure that pension claims were dealt with promptly.²⁰³ Finally, in prairial, Collot d'Herbois introduced an entirely new scheme that completely transformed military pension provision by abolishing the link between rank and remuneration that had defined all previous legislation in this sphere. From prairial onwards, every war-widow was assured a minimum income of 300 *livres* a year, regardless of her husband's rank, and a further 150 *livres* was awarded to each orphaned child up to the age of twelve.²⁰⁴ The law was, by any standards, generous. As a legal minimum, 300 *livres* a year doubled the rate set for war-widows the previous June, while the law's maximum payment of 1,500 *livres* represented a staggering increase on any of the Convention's earlier provisions for the bereaved. The sums involved were unprecedented, but the improvements introduced in prairial

¹⁹⁹ Presenting the Convention with a war-widows' pension decree in June 1793, Peltier insisted that to ignore these women's plight would be to consign them to 'la douleur et la misère.' *A. P.* vol. 66, p. 27.

²⁰⁰ During the debate on the law of May 4, 1793, Marat and Vergniaud made common cause in opposing all attempts to dilute the law's provisions for servicemen's families. *A. P.* vol. 64, pp. 58-9.

²⁰¹ *A. P.* vol. 64, pp. 57-9, and Peltier, 'Rapport et projet de décret...', *A. P.* vol. 66, p. 27-8.

²⁰² By comparison, the pensions awarded those widowed and orphaned on August 10th were set at 125 and 40 *livres* respectively. Beauvais, *Rapport*, p. 8.

²⁰³ *A. M.* no. 97, 7 nivôse *an II*, p. 54.

²⁰⁴ Collot d'Herbois, *Rapport fait au nom des Comités de Salut Public, Liquidation et Secours réunis sur les pensions, indemnité et secours à payer aux familles des défenseurs de la patrie par Collot d'Herbois, le 14 prairial an II*, (Paris, *an II*) p. 10.

were not simply financial. Already in nivôse, Robespierre had criticised the 'multiplicité des demandes' that officials imposed upon the war-widow seeking her due and in prairial, Collot's very pointed comments concerning the authorities' 'froideur glaciale' were accompanied by a series of measures designed to simplify the submission of claims as far as possible.²⁰⁵ Reams of paperwork were removed from the application process and the authorities were urged to handle requests as quickly and sensitively as possible.

On paper, the results of this reform were impressive, but few would ever see the benefits of this largesse. Even in 1793, administering and financing the Convention's previous pension schemes had placed an enormous strain on the already overstretched authorities charged with their implementation, forcing many deputies to resort to emergency advances in the *départements*, but after Thermidor, the political will required to realize Collot's much more ambitious policy simply evaporated.²⁰⁶ A massive backlog of unprocessed applications was allowed to accumulate, but more importantly, pensions, when they were paid at all, were invariably late, and with the *assignat* in freefall throughout 1795, almost worthless.²⁰⁷ The abolition of price controls and the onset of rampant inflation in the year III made a mockery of the war-widows' three hundred *livres* a year, but if the economic crisis of *nonante-cinq* was partly to blame for this catastrophic depreciation, the political circumstances of the reaction were at the heart of the problem. In prairial *an II*, providing for the widowed and orphaned had seemed 'la devoir la plus doux de tous ceux que la patrie nous impose', but a year later, the mood in the Convention had changed completely.²⁰⁸ By prairial *an III*, with Collot already en route to his exile in Guiana and his former colleagues preparing to expel non-Parisian war-widows from the capital as a threat to the social order, the Convention's sense of duty was a thing of the past.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁵ A. M. no. 97, 7 nivôse an II, p. 54, and Collot d'Herbois, *Rapport*, pp. 4 and 14.

²⁰⁶ While Alan Forrest has emphasised the problems involved in administering the Convention's welfare policies throughout the Terror, Jean-Pierre Gross's research suggests that many deputies on mission resolved these problems on a local level by making advance payments to the soldiers' families out of revolutionary taxes. Forrest, *The French Revolution and the poor*, pp. 150-2 and J.-P. Gross, *Fair Shares for all: Jacobin egalitarianism in practice*, (Cambridge, (1997) pp. 168-9.

²⁰⁷ By 1796, over 10,000 applications remained unprocessed. Woloch, 'War-widows pensions', p. 247.

²⁰⁸ Collot d'Herbois, *Rapport*, p. 3.

²⁰⁹ For the Thermidorians' attempt to drive non-Parisian war-widows out of the capital after the suppression of the prairial rising, see Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship*, p. 49.

Politically and economically, Thermidor was a disaster for the war-widow, and in *an IV*, the Directory was hardly any more inclined to look sympathetically on her plight. A few unconvincing attempts were made to compensate pensioners for the collapse of the *assignat*, but these gestures proved almost entirely meaningless as payments continued to be made in the equally worthless *mandates*.²¹⁰ The last day of the year *IV* did bring a return to payment in specie, but also a default on three quarters of the sums due, a matter which was, in any case, of academic interest only as most local authorities had long since ceased paying any pensions whatsoever.²¹¹ In 1796, the war-widow was expected to bear the full brunt of 'les sacrifices commandés par les circonstances', but the promise of a far-reaching reform of the pension system did at least hold out some hope for the future.²¹² Reform, however, simply meant further retrenchment, and while the deputies continued to boast of their 'sollicitude paternelle' for the bereaved, in practice, the warning that 'en matière de secours vous n'avez d'autre règle à suivre que vos moyens... [et] Vos moyens sont nuls ou presque nuls' carried significantly more weight in the debate that ensued.²¹³

Although the Councils squabbled over the minutiae of pension reform for the best part of a year, the fundamental principles underlying the law of 14 fructidor *an VI* were established early on in the debate. In one speech after another, the Convention's pension policy was denounced as both unrealistic and unworkable. Its 'générosité' was judged 'excessive' and its terms too open to abuse; it even, some suggested, licensed 'la libertinage', but if many reasons were given for repudiating the law of prairial year II, one instinct informed them all.²¹⁴ In 1798, the Convention's policy

²¹⁰ Woloch, *The French veteran*, pp. 93-4.

²¹¹ A. M. no. 6, 6 vendémiaire *an V*, pp. 22-3. Speaking in fructidor *an V*, Jourdan admitted that even this reduced sum had rarely been paid, and demanded that the authorities do more to honour 'la dette la plus sacrée de l'état.' *Motion d'ordre de Jourdan de la Haute-Vienne le 28 fructidor an V*, (Paris, *an V*) p. 3. For an instance of how this policy worked, or rather failed to work, in practice, see M. Reinhard, *Le département de la Sarthe sous le régime Directorial*, (Saint-Brieuc, 1936) p. 443.

²¹² A. M. no. 6, 6 vendémiaire *an V*, p. 23.

²¹³ *Rapport fait par Lucien Bonaparte au nom d'une commission spéciale sur les secours à accorder aux veuves et enfans des militaires...*, (Paris, *an VI*) p. 3, and *Opinion de J.-G. Lacuée sur la résolution du 17 thermidor relative aux secours à accorder aux veuves et enfans des militaires*, (Paris, *an VI*) p. 4.

²¹⁴ Arguing that 'des bornes justes et raisonnables' be set for compensation, Marbot denounced the Convention's policy for its 'excessive générosité', while Girot-Pouzol condemned the 'grand nombre d'abus' allowed under the existing law. In order to rectify these abuses, Desmolin insisted that each new claim should be accompanied by copious documentary proof of marriage as 'nous ne voulons ni récompenser ni même favoriser la libertinage.' *Rapport fait par Marbot sur les pensions et secours à accorder aux veuves des militaires et de leurs enfans orphelins, le 17 messidor an VI*, (Paris, *an VI*) p. 1, Girot-Pouzol, *Rapport*, p. 3, and *Rapport fait par Desmolin sur les pensions et secours des veuves et des enfans des militaires... le 8 floréal an 6*, (Paris, *an VI*) p. 3.

stood condemned for its failure to respect the natural order of things. In place of the proper deference that was due to rank, it had introduced a profligate disregard for the distinctions that now underpinned Directorial society, and so, the deputies turned their backs on the egalitarian principles of the year II, and restored the old link between rank and recompense. Predictably, the widows of privates and NCOs were the chief casualties of the Councils' concern for 'justice' in such matters.²¹⁵ With their pensions cut to between one and two hundred *francs*, their loss was immediate and substantial. By contrast, officers' wives, particularly if they had the good fortune to have lost a general, fared considerably better. Compensation for junior officers' widows was set at double the soldiers' scale, while the rate for generals' wives was steadily revised upwards until it amounted to nine times that awarded the rank and file. At the apex of this new hierarchy of grief, the commander's widow could look forward to a very comfortable future with up to 1500 *francs* a year.²¹⁶ Clumsily, a few deputies conceded that all widows 'ont moralement également perdu', but the accompanying claim that 'une égale indemnité morale leur est due' was small consolation to the vast majority of the bereaved.²¹⁷ In death, as in everything else under the Directory, some citizens were more equal than others.

This retreat from the idealism of *an II* has been interpreted as an attempt to reconcile financial realism with the ambition of building an *armée de métier*, a professional service where rank received its just reward, and undoubtedly these factors did inspire many of the contributors to the debate on pension reform.²¹⁸ And yet, for all their newfound sense of pragmatism, the rhetoric that accompanied the deputies' deliberations remained as extravagant as ever. Even the most cost-conscious contributors to the pension debate insisted on their passionate commitment to 'la justice et de l'humanité', and when the accounts were finally drawn up the following

²¹⁵ Rivaud's emphasis on the practicality and the 'justice' of this measure is typical of the tenor of the debate. *Opinion de F. Rivaud sur la résolution du 17 thermidor sur les secours à accorder aux veuves des militaires*, (Paris, an VI) p. 4.

²¹⁶ The rate for generals had initially been set at 400 to 600 francs, but the Anciens judged this 'trop petite' and sent the measure back to the Cinq Cents for revision upwards in messidor an VI. No such recommendation was made in favour of the private's widow. Bonaparte, *Rapport*, pp. 5 and 11.

²¹⁷ While accepting that all war-widows had suffered an equal loss in personal terms, Lacuée justified the gradation of pensions on the grounds that: 'Mais ont-elles droit à une égale indemnité pécuniaire? Non, car elles n'ont pas fait une perte pécuniaire égale.' *Opinion de J.-G. Lacuée*..., p. 5.

²¹⁸ Woloch, 'War-widows pensions', p. 243.

spring, that language remained the same.²¹⁹ As Delbrel presented the Cinq-Cents with his *Rapport sur trois états des pensions* in floréal an VII, he urged his colleagues to

Transportez-vous sur un champ de bataille... Promenez vos regards sur ce vaste tombeau; entendez les derniers soupirs, écoutez les dernières paroles du soldat expirant. Il recommande à la bienfaisance nationale sa femme et ses enfants. Les secours qu'il implore pour eux sont le prix du sang qu'il a versé pour vous.²²⁰

Providing for these women and children, he concluded, was the Republic's 'dette plus sacrée', but in the absence of a valid marriage license and a bona fide *certificate de non-divorce*, the Directory felt free to renege on this debt. Whereas the Convention had taken an extremely dim view of civil servants imposing 'des formalités surabondantes et inutiles' on these most deserving of *citoyennes*, the red tape returned with a vengeance in 1798, swamping the unfortunate widow in a morass of paperwork culminating in individual scrutiny by a special commission of the Cinq-Cents.²²¹ It is difficult to see how this rigmarole contributed to professionalizing the armed forces, but it certainly cut down on the number of pensions to be paid as claimants struggled to negotiate this bureaucratic maze. As was only to be expected, 'un très grand nombre' of applications failed to meet these exacting standards of documentary proof, while another twenty-two claims were disqualified at the last moment by the deputies themselves, but even for those who did manage to dot every i and cross every t, the results were bitterly disappointing.²²² When the war-widows' pensions were finally paid in prairial an VII, the average annuity fell from over 600 *livres* in 1794 to a meagre 155 *francs*, while the orphans' allowance was cut to a miserable 66 *francs* a year.²²³ For these women, and for their children, the promise that the Republic still cherished the memory of 'nos généreux défenseurs' must have rung hollow indeed.²²⁴ In May 1799, the soldier's 'prix du sang' amounted to less than three *francs* a week.

²¹⁹ *Opinion de Thiebault prononcé à la séance du 29 thermidor an VI*, (Paris, an VI, p. 2.

²²⁰ *Rapport fait par Delbrel sur trois états des pensions à accorder à des veuves et à des enfants orphelins des défenseurs de la patrie, le 27 floréal, an VII*, (Paris, an VII) p. 5.

²²¹ Collot, *Rapport*, p. 5. On the pretext that too many 'mains impures' had been awarded pensions in the past, the Councils resolved to impose a much more rigorous verification process on all applications. Desmolin, *Rapport*, p. 2.

²²² Having passed the initial stages of the application procedure, twenty-two claims were rejected at the last moment by the Cinq-Cents for want of the proper paperwork, but Delbrel's report acknowledged that 'un très grand nombre d'autres' had already been weeded out at an earlier stage of the administrative process. Delbrel, *Rapport*, p. 2.

²²³ In prairial an VII, the Anciens authorised the distribution of 119,306 francs to 768 war-widows, or an average of 155 francs each. *Rapport fait par Vernier sur les pensions alimentaires et secours accordés aux veuves et orphelins de défenseurs de la patrie...*, (Paris, an VII) p. 6.

²²⁴ Desmolin, *Rapport*, p. 2.

This pittance was meant to place the recipient 'au-dessus des besoins', but with a weekly income amounting to little more than the average daily wage, the war-widow's position was anything but secure, especially as she could no longer expect much assistance from any other quarter.²²⁵ By 1799, both the traditional institutions of poor relief and their Revolutionary replacements lay in ruins. Bankrupt *hospitaux* and under-funded local authorities were in no position to offer the war-widow any help, and nor, after *an II*, could she hope to fall back on the patriotic *bienfaisance* of the Jacobin clubs. From the outbreak of hostilities on, the clubs had, as we have seen, provided a vital safety net for many soldiers' families, but after Thermidor, this prop had, to all intents and purposes, fallen away. Certainly, the remains of the club network, the *cercles constitutionnels*, could still be relied upon to plead the war-widow's case to the authorities, but they were too few and too enervated to offer her any real help. Well-intentioned, but utterly inadequate, donations were periodically dispatched to Paris to ease the distress of the families that had made 'les sacrifices les plus pénibles', but the local initiatives and large-scale relief schemes of the year II were a thing of the past, and when the Directory turned on the left after Floréal, even those good intentions dried up.²²⁶ By 1799, Jacobinism had little to offer the widowed and orphaned but commiseration.

Of course, it could have been worse. Unlike the provisions for the poor contained in Barère's *Grand Livre de Bienfaisance Nationale*, the war-widow's pension was not abolished outright, and unlike the aged and infirm who depended on France's cash-starved hospitals, this particular class of 'infortunés' was not entirely abandoned by the authorities after *an II*.²²⁷ However, if the war-widow fared a little better than her civilian counterpart in 1798, this was largely down to the hard-headed realisation that recruitment would dry up completely in the absence of some provision for the soldiers' next of kin. With the armies haemorrhaging manpower and desertion running out of control throughout the year VI, it was the renewed challenge of mass mobilisation rather than any sense of duty that drove the Directory to reconsider the

²²⁵ Desmolin, *Rapport*, p. 7. Despite a fall in the cost of living since 1795, wages had remained high: a carpenter in the Sarthe, for example, could expect to earn over 2 *francs* a day in 1798. Reinhard, *Le département de la Sarthe*, p. 417.

²²⁶ In January 1798, for example, Pau's constitutional circle sent 300 *francs* to the capital for distribution among soldiers' families in distress. *Journal des Hommes Libres*, no. 256, 11 pluviôse an VI, p. 1061.

²²⁷ Vernier, *Rapport*, p. 10.

'dette de la patrie'.²²⁸ This theme was emphasised repeatedly as the pension bill made its way through the Councils, and it surfaced again when the pensions were finally paid. Breaking off from the humbug of his opening remarks about honouring the soldier's dying wish, Delbrel summed the situation up bluntly in May 1799:

le politique nous dit qu'un des meilleurs moyens d'opérer des levées pour le recrutement de nos armées, c'est d'assurer la subsistance des veuves et des enfans de ceux qui se dévouent à la défense de la patrie.²²⁹

However much the mean-spirited terms of the new legislation and the pittance it finally produced were dressed up in the self-congratulatory rhetoric of sentimental paternalism, the cold logic of the call-up was all that preserved the war-widow's pension from the same fate that befell all of the Convention's other social welfare schemes after Thermidor. Whatever gloss the Councils chose to put on it, the pension reform of fructidor year VI was less an act of recognition for the soldiers' sacrifice than a reflection of the recruitment crisis that led to the introduction of conscription that same week.

It is easy to mock the extravagant eulogies of the year II. It is just as tempting to contrast the posturing of the politicians who summoned young men to fight from the safety of the capital with the letters from the front that spoke of squalor and homesickness as often as they evoked the justice of the Republic's cause.²³⁰ Barère never boasted of the *mal du pays* that laid waste entire brigades, and the fear of dying in a foreign land never complicated the *Recueil's* reports of unalloyed martial valour and unstinting Revolutionary zeal.²³¹ Despite the politicians' best efforts to camouflage the carnage with inspiring epitaphs and trite tributes, most soldiers did not, of course, die illustrious deaths. If they were lucky, they died too suddenly to cry one last 'Vive libre ou mourir' or to whisper 'Prend mon Poste' to an attentive comrade.²³² The less fortunate, the majority, died slowly, from wounds that were

²²⁸ *Rapport fait par Marbot sur la résolution relative aux pensions et secours dus aux veuves et aux enfans orphelins des défenseurs de la patrie*, (Paris, an VI) p. 7.

²²⁹ Delbrel, *Rapport*, p. 5.

²³⁰ Although an enthusiastic volunteer, Claude-Joseph Gillet's letters home complained incessantly of 'la misère, la faim' and the absence of adequate clothing and footwear that plagued the Armée des Alpes throughout the winter of 1793. F. Vermail, ed. 'Lettres inédites d'un sous-lieutenant de l'armée des Alpes (1792-1793)', *A. h. R. f.*, vol. vi, (1929) pp. 56-74.

²³¹ On the devastating effects of homesickness in the ranks, see M. Reinhard, 'Nostalgie et service militaire pendant la Révolution', *A. h. R. f.* vol. xxx, (1958) pp. 1-15.

²³² *Recueil des Actions Héroïques et Civiques*, no. ii, 1 ventôse an II, p. 14, and *Prends mon Poste... Viens! Sauve la Patrie!!!*, B. N., Estampes, coll. Hennin, no. 12,367.

rarely glorious but often gangrenous, on the backs of carts or in fetid field hospitals, too debilitated by pain to utter a stirring slogan, too delirious with fever to remember David's lessons in how a Republican should die. In a Convention, however, where 'cicatrices' were always 'glorieuses' and where soldiers invariably expired with 'venge ma mort' on their lips, commemoration generally overlooked these inconvenient facts.²³³ For the deputies, the dead were so many recruiting sergeants, vehicles for an unrelenting jingoism that thought little of the soldier's suffering, but relished the opportunity to use his death to urge others to take his place. And yet, while commemoration in the year II all but ignored the agonies of the men who gave their lives for liberty, it did attempt to relieve the anguish of those they left behind. In both the Convention and the clubs, the commemoration of the *citoyen-soldat* had been matched by a sincere, if only sporadically effective, concern for the welfare of the widows and orphans left to face the world alone by the war. From the 66 *livres* that the Jacobins of Orthez raised to help a soldier's orphaned son return to his family in Toulouse to the 185,000 *livres* that Roux-Fazaillac distributed among the *défenseurs'* families of the Dordogne during his mission there, *la patrie reconnaissante* was not just another empty slogan in *an II*.²³⁴ For all the shortcomings of its provisions for these women and children, and they were legion, the Republic of the year II did at least try to honour its responsibilities towards the memory of its dead. For all its fine words and imposing ceremonies, for all its promises that:

Nous recueillons religieusement les cendres des héros morts sur le champ de bataille; ils se sont généreusement dévoués pour la patrie; la patrie leur doit une reconnaissance immortelle

the Directory did not.²³⁵

In practice, of course, this distinction might easily seem immaterial. For the widows and orphans who were reduced to the depths of 'misère' by a death at the front, it hardly mattered whether the Montagnards had made promises they could not keep or whether their successors simply reneged on promises they had not made.²³⁶ Destitution was the most likely result in either case, but the distress these families

²³³ *Recueil des Actions Héroïques et Civiques*, no. ii, 1 ventôse an II, p. 14.

²³⁴ A. Plante ed. 'Les Jacobins d'Orthez: Livre pour la transcription des délibérations de la Société des Amis de la Constitution réunis au réfectoire des ci-devants Capucins d'Orthez', *Bulletin de la Société des sciences de Pau*, vol xxix, (1901) pp. 1-263, pp. 255-6, and Gross, *Fair Shares for all*, p. 169.

²³⁵ *Rapport fait par Delpierre des Vosges au nom d'une Commission Spéciale... du 1 thermidor an VI*, (Paris, an VI) p. 2.

²³⁶ In nivôse an VI, Fougères' constitutional circle petitioned Paris alerting the authorities to the misery of military families left 'sans secours.' *Journal des Hommes Libres*, no. 240, 25 nivôse an VI, p. 997.

were left to endure after the Terror is a measure of what the remembrance of 'nos braves défenseurs' actually meant from 1795 onwards. Talk was cheap in Directorial France, particularly among the 'grands diseurs de rien' in the Councils; ceremonial, particularly in the provinces where the festivals in honour of Hoche or Joubert rarely amounted to anything more than a parade by a few Guardsmen followed by a banquet for the local bigwigs, scarcely less so.²³⁷ Pensions, however, cost money, and neither the Thermidorians nor the Directory proved especially anxious to match their rhetorical commitment to the dead with hard cash. Certainly, fiscal circumstances were strained throughout these years, but fiscal circumstances did not prevent the Councils from making exceptions to the defaults and the foot-dragging that characterised so much of their dealings with the bereaved. Special cases, such as the Girondins' widows or Hoche's father and Marceau's mother, were afforded special treatment in the knowledge that their predicament was too public to ignore, their impoverishment too conspicuous an indictment of the Republic's neglect to overlook. However, the urgent attention their cases received and the 2,000 *francs* a year awarded Mmes Carra, Brissot, and Gorsas in April 1796 and Mme Marceau in September 1797 merely serves to underscore the deputies' unhurried, and so very ungenerous, approach to providing for everyone else.²³⁸ *Commissions spéciales* could be formed and funds found for the families of prominent politicians and popular generals, but for the thousands of women and children left widowed and fatherless by the death of an unknown private or an undistinguished corporal, there had been no such urgency and scant generosity. There was too little political capital to be made from coming to their aid, and very little shame to be incurred from their impoverishment. There was, after all, so much poverty around. If a few deputies were genuinely outraged at 'la plus profonde misère' that these men's families had been allowed to descend into, the indignation that impelled Jean-Baptiste Jourdan to remind his colleagues of their duties to the dead *défenseur* was the exception rather

²³⁷ For General Dupuy's caustic description of his political masters, see J. Godechot's review of A. Ollivier, *Le Dix-huit brumaire*, A. h. R. f., vol. 33, (1961) p. 132. For a typical commemoration during the Directory, see, for example, the proceedings in Mauriac, where the local authorities repaired to the town hall for a 'banquet civique' after the town's ceremony in honour of Hoche, drinking twelve toasts in the process. *Détails de la cérémonie funèbre qui a eu lieu à Mauriac, département de Cantal, le 28 vendémiaire an VI en mémoire de Hoche...*, (Aurillac, s. d.) B. L. F.1083.31, p. 22.

²³⁸ For the pensions awarded the widows of the Girondin deputies, see the *Rapport fait par Bailleul au nom de la commission chargé d'examiner la pétition des veuves et enfans Carra, Gorsas, Valazé, Brissot...*, dans la séance du 21 germinal an IV, (Paris, an IV) For the Hoche and Marceau families, see the *Journal des Hommes Libres*, no. 140, 15 vendémiaire an VI, p. 585, and *Rapport fait au nom d'une Commission Spéciale sur la pétition de la mère du général Marceau*, A. N. AD VIII-19.

than the rule in the Councils.²³⁹ Instead, there was the strange sort of determination to honour the 'dette de la patrie' that repeatedly defaulted on its obligations and the equally unconvincing kind of 'munificence nationale' that finally decided that a private's life was worth a fraction of a general's to the families they left behind.²⁴⁰

It is very difficult to reconcile this dismal record of penny-pinching and procrastination with the frequently repeated promise that the Directory honoured the memory of its dead. It is hardly any easier to see how the destitution the *défenseurs*' dependants were left to endure after Thermidor can be squared with Lynn Hunt's suggestion that the Directory aspired to reaffirm 'the republic's commitment to the family as the bedrock of society' after the Terror.²⁴¹ Their fate scarcely seems consistent with the family values enshrined in the Constitution of *an III* and enacted in the moralizing festivals and mawkish melodramas that lie at the heart of Hunt's curiously classless 'family romance'.²⁴² So too, the Councils' consistent neglect of the war-widow and her offspring seems equally at odds with Livesey's recent attempt to rehabilitate Directorial political culture by focussing on the sentimental strategies that underpinned the funeral festivals of these years. Perhaps the authorities' attempts to wring every last jot of pathos out of the despair that reduced Hoche's father to a shuffling wreck at his son's funeral or the desolation that prevented Mme Roberjot from attending her husband's memorial did constitute an entirely new form of 'sentimental spectacle' in the service of the Republican ideal.²⁴³ Perhaps Hoche's death was genuinely 'mourned as a loss to the sentimental community of the nation', although exploited seems the more appropriate term for an officialdom that was not above suggesting that Hoche's father should be seen to be 'dans l'attitude de la

²³⁹ Jourdan, *Motion d'ordre*, p. 2.

²⁴⁰ *Opinion de Thiebault prononcée la séance du 29 thermidor an VI*, (Paris, an VI) p. 2.

²⁴¹ Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*, p. 160.

²⁴² Article IV of the year III's *Déclaration des Devoirs* declared that 'Nul n'est bon citoyen, s'il n'est bon fils, bon père, bon frère, bon ami, bon époux', and these values were embodied in the festivals of *la Jeunesse*, *la Vieillesse*, and *les Époux* that punctuated the Republican calendar from brumaire an IV onwards. *Les Constitutions de la France depuis 1789*, p. 103.

²⁴³ Replying to François de Neufchâteau's request to attend the ceremony on the 20th of prairial, Mme Roberjot excused herself on grounds of 'le mauvais état de ma santé'. A. N. F/1cI/113, no. 2504. Livesey's emphasis on the novelty of this 'sentimental spectacle' seems exaggerated. Few of those present on the Champ de Mars for Hoche's funeral in vendémiaire an VI would have noticed a marked change in the setting since 1790's ceremony in honour of the guardsmen who died at Nancy, while eulogists throughout the decade had always used the grief of bereaved families as a metaphor for the nation's loss. For Livesey's discussion of the rôle of sentiment in the Directory's funeral festivals, see Livesey, *Making Democracy*, p. 215.

douleur' during his son's funeral.²⁴⁴ Fortunately for the festival's organisers, the septuagenarian Hoche obliged, and both the official *procès-verbal* and press reports of the ceremony made the most of the unrestrained 'sanglots' that shook his frame as he approached his son's bust on the Champ de Mars, and revelled in the 'cris des femmes et des enfants qui l'environnent.'²⁴⁵ As they waited for the recognition that was always promised but that never arrived, many women and children must have wept equally bitter tears throughout these years, but the Directory never publicised these, it had done too much to cause them.

The Directory's military funerals furnish sombre countenances and hear-rending speeches aplenty, ample material for historians inclined towards the cultural turn, but beneath this façade, there was no concern for the dead and precious little consideration for the bereaved, just a desperate attempt to shore up the authority of an increasingly unloved Republic with the corpses of fallen heroes. Like the architects who consigned the names of the dead to the most inconspicuous extremities of their triumphal arches, (see Figure 14) and the eulogists who recalled the dead merely to summon vengeance down upon the crowned heads of Europe, the Directory's rites of memory were grimly opportunistic affairs.²⁴⁶ Just as the Directory came to rely upon the army to offset its lack of political legitimacy, so it turned to the celebration of its generals because it could no longer derive any real moral authority from the memory of martyred deputies or the commemoration of a too-controversial Enlightenment. The citizen-soldier had come to occupy an increasingly prominent place in the Revolution's rites of memory since the war began, but after *an II*, the militarization of Revolutionary remembrance took place as if by default. To assume otherwise, to think that these well-regimented *services funèbres* signified any real sympathy for the nation's war-dead or any desire to comfort the bereaved is just wishful thinking. It is to mistake a handful of spectacular commemorations for real compassion and to

²⁴⁴ A. N. F17/1065, ms. note attached to a programme for the festival, and Livesey, *Making Democracy*, p. 215.

²⁴⁵ *Procès-verbal de la Cérémonie funèbre qui a lieu au Champs de Mars, à Paris, le 10 vendémiaire an VI, en mémoire du Général Hoche*, (Paris, an VI) B. N. Lb42/453, pp. 2, 4 and 10.

²⁴⁶ See for example, Antoine Voinier's plan for an enormous *Arc de Triomphe* at the Étoile. The plan called for the construction of a colossal arch capped by a temple of Immortality with an obelisk inside, inscribed with the names of 'des citoyens morts glorieusement pour la défense de la patrie'. Given the monument's size and the obelisk's location within it, these names would have been entirely illegible, but this did not seem to matter. A. Voinier, *Projet d'un monument triomphal en l'honneur des quatorze armées de la République*, B. N. VP/7647.

confuse the sentimental speeches of state ceremonial with the grim reality of official neglect. Above all, it is to take the politicians too much at their word because far away from the parade grounds where this counterfeit compassion was played out, too many real families, soldiers' families, could still be found 'meurent de faim' when the Consulate began for the Directory's commitment to honouring the Republic's 'dette plus sacrée' to seem very convincing.²⁴⁷

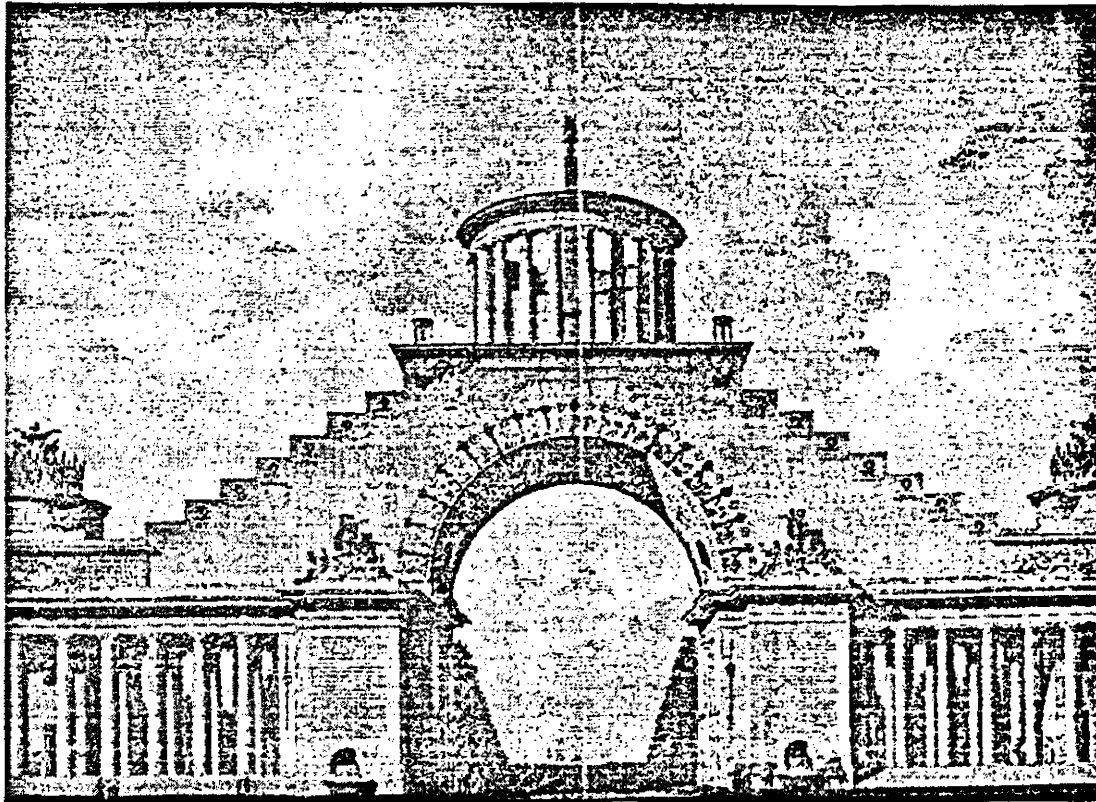


Figure 14, A. Voinier, *Projet d'un monument triomphal en l'honneur des quatorze armées de la République*, (Paris, an III)

Promises had been made throughout the Revolutionary decade; promises to pay pensions and build monuments, promises to respect the memory of the nation's dead.

²⁴⁷ Reporting from the Nord and the Pas-de-Calais early in the year X, Antoine François Fourcroy claimed that the majority of military pensioners were dying of hunger because their claims had been left unanswered. 'Compte-rendu par le citoyen Fourcroy, Conseiller d'État de sa mission dans la 16e division militaire...' in F. Rocquain, ed. *L'État de la France au 18 brumaire d'après les rapports des Conseillers d'État chargés d'une enquête sur la situation de la République*, (Paris, 1874) pp. 217-8.

Few of them had ever been kept. As he wrote his *Mémoires* during the Restoration, Thibaudeau reflected on the Revolution's failure to honour some of those promises:

Depuis le commencement de la guerre, avant et depuis le 9 thermidor, on avait bien autre chose à faire; les vivans étaient trop occupés d'eux-mêmes pour songer aux morts. La succession rapide des événemens, le choc continu des partis, l'instabilité dans les pouvoirs, les dépenses de la guerre ne laissaient ni le loisir de concevoir des monuments glorieux, ni les moyens d'en ériger de durables. On ne faisait que des statues de plâtre et des colonnes de bois, et il n'est rien resté... que quelques médailles et des discours.²⁴⁸

It is a bleak conclusion, but a fair one, as any visitor to Restoration Paris could confirm. All over the capital, the monumental débris of the previous decades had been hurriedly cleared away as the Bourbons put at least one part of their promise of 'union et oubli' to very literal effect. Plans were quickly laid to restore all the royal statues that had been toppled in August 1792, and in 1818, a new Henri IV returned to its place on the Pont-Neuf, cast from bronze taken from Dejoux's massive *Monument au Général Desaix*.²⁴⁹ It was an unseemly end to an unloved statue, but at least there had been Imperial monuments to melt down. The Revolution, by contrast, left little for the Bourbons to recycle. Marat's monument on the Place du Carrousel had been demolished in February 1795, the Panthéon had been returned to the Church after the Concordat and the place de la Bastille had remained empty until the Empire erected its absurd elephantine expedient in 1814. Like the illuminations that lit up the ruined citadel in July 1790 and the outlandishly over-endowed *Nature régénérée* raised for 1793's Fête de la Réunion, Alavoine's Imperial elephant had never been anything more than a stopgap, a plaster model awaiting the arrival of captured cannon to assume a more durable form. The Prussian guns, however, never arrived, or rather, they arrived with Prussians still inconsiderately in tow, and by 1824, when Thibaudeau's *Mémoires* was published, the weather had already begun to take its toll on the Empire's enigmatic 'sorte de symbole'.²⁵⁰ 'Morne, malade, croulant', it remained there until 1846, tucked away in this conveniently unfashionable corner of the city, forgotten by all but Hugo. The Bourbons had not even bothered to tear it down.

²⁴⁸ Thibaudeau, *Mémoires*, vol. i, p. 118.

²⁴⁹ For Henri's return to the Pont-Neuf, see A. Wagner 'Outrages: Sculptures and Kingship in France after 1789', in P. Bermingham and J. Brewer (eds.) *The Consumption of Culture 1600-1800: Images, Objects, Texts* (London, 1995) pp. 294-318.

²⁵⁰ V. Hugo, *Les Misérables*, 5 vols. (Paris, 1890 ed.) vol. iv, p. 234.

No monument ever honoured the men who died at the Bastille, and those who perished on August 10th hardly fared any better. Two days after the fighting in the Tuileries, the Commune had decreed the erection of a memorial in their honour on the *Place des Victoires*.²⁵¹ A wooden model, painted to look like porphyry, was installed soon after on the plinth once occupied by Louis XIV, and plans were laid for a more permanent structure, but as usual, they came to nothing.²⁵² In 1798, when Frederick Meyer returned to Paris, Poyet's makeshift memorial was still in place, its paint peeling and its timbers split, its steady disintegration mocking the by-now barely legible inscription on its base: 'Patrie, tu nous rends immortel.'²⁵³ After six years, this weather-beaten wreck was all that marked the memory of the 376 *défenseurs de la liberté* whose deaths had given birth to the Republic, but Châteaudun's call for monuments to commemorate the infinitely more numerous *défenseurs de la patrie* whose sacrifice that secured that Republic's survival remained equally unanswered. Some Jacobin clubs had, as we have seen, raised their own cenotaphs, but the response from the authorities in Paris had been rather less forthcoming. *Concours* had been launched, of course, and ambitious architects had repeatedly answered the call of the *patrie*. In the year II, year IV, and again in ventôse year VII, when Lucien Bonaparte announced yet another contest for yet another column 'à la gloire des braves morts dans la guerre de la Liberté', they had submitted their plans for inspiring statuary and triumphal monuments, but none of these designs had ever got past the drawing board.²⁵⁴ A few temporary monuments had been made to mark specific occasions, but by the time of Meyer's return to Paris, let alone when Thibaudeau's memoirs appeared, the 'cénotaphe antique' that had adorned the Champ de Mars during the federation of 1792, like the mean little memorial raised for 1794's *Fête des Victoires*, had long since disappeared.²⁵⁵ Turenne, admittedly, remained where he had been installed in *Les Invalides*, but the Revolution's claim to a share in his glory had always been so spurious that no one even attempted to undo this rather shameless attempt to claim credit for the *Grand Siècle*, and in any event, his presence there

²⁵¹ A. M. no. 227, 14 August 1792, p. 394.

²⁵² A permanent replacement was planned in the *concours* of an II. Guillaume, C. I. P. vol. iv, p. 251.

²⁵³ F. Meyer, *Fragments sur Paris*, (Hambourg, 1798) p. 55.

²⁵⁴ Cited in J.-M. Bruson et al, *La Révolution française, le premier Empire, Dessins du Musée Carnavalet*, (Paris, 1983) p.151.

²⁵⁵ It appears that the urn in the *Jardin National* disappeared soon after its installation in an III. Meyer's meticulous description of the *Jardin* makes no reference to it, and neither does Blagdon's detailed description from 1801. Blagdon, *Paris as it was and as it is ...*, vol. i, pp. 114-29.

hardly constituted an affront to Bourbon *amour-propre*. In 1792, David had promised that grand monuments would 'prouver à la postérité et à l'univers les sentiments de la reconnaissance et de l'admiration de la République pour le courage, le désintéressement, l'héroïsme, le généreux patriotisme' of the citizen-soldier, but three decades later, no monument recalled the one and a half million men who had died for the *patrie*.²⁵⁶

In the end, it was the same in the provinces, where the war-memorials of the year II rarely survived the passage of time or the constantly shifting priorities of Parisian politics. The fate of the pyramid on Reims' *place Nationale* is typical. Having taken the place of Pigalle's statue of Louis XV in August 1793, it was deposed under the Directory in favour of a statue of Liberty, which was, in its turn, replaced by a Consular trophy in 1803 and a great globe surmounted by an Imperial crown in 1809. Finally, on Saint-Louis' day in 1819, a replica of Pigalle's statue was hauled atop that oh-so accommodating pedestal, and the last vestige of the Revolution and its dead disappeared from the renamed *place Royale*.²⁵⁷ Even closer to the capital, the obelisk on Suresnes' *place d'Armes* proved no more permanent. Replaced by a mission cross during the Restoration, there was no place for the nation's dead in nineteenth-century Suresnes, although ironically, the town now hosts two massive monuments to the casualties of subsequent conflicts, including one of the largest American war memorials in France.²⁵⁸ In both Reims and Suresnes, the desire to remember the Republic's dead had rapidly given way to the urge to forget the Revolution, but at least these towns had raised monuments to the *citoyen-soldat*, however ephemeral they proved to be. Few others had even got this far. Just as the closure of Artonne's club put paid to its plans for a memorial plaque, so the collapse of the Jacobin network put a stop to the commemoration of ordinary soldiers like Pierre Thiat's son. Like the once-treasured busts of Marat that had come and gone in a hail of hammer blows, the *clubistes'* promises to remember the *défenseur* did not, could not, survive the recriminations of the year III.

²⁵⁶ Wildenstein, *Documents complémentaires*, p. 44.

²⁵⁷ Tarbé, *Reims, ses rues et ses monuments*, pp. 178-80.

²⁵⁸ Leith, *Space and Revolution*, p. 306. Opened in 1917 but not officially inaugurated until 1919, over fifteen hundred soldiers from both World Wars are buried in Suresnes' American cemetery on Mont Valérien. Lower down the hill, a *Mémorial de la France Combattante* was unveiled in 1958 in honour of seventeen local men who died in the resistance.

After a decade of turmoil, nothing, as Thibaudeau noted, remained but words. In many ways, this might be a verdict on the Revolution's legacy *tout court*, but in the absence of any lasting monument to the memory of 'nos braves défenseurs', Thibaudeau's gloomy conclusion seems an especially fitting assessment of the Revolution's commemorative endeavours. His explanations for this absence sound like so many excuses, but they have a certain validity nevertheless. Even before the war began, it had been difficult enough to find the one and a half million *livres* needed to finance the Panthéon, but with the outbreak of hostilities, monumental art became a luxury a *patrie* that was perpetually *en danger* could ill afford. The cardboard cenotaphs and plaster pyramids that adorned so many Revolutionary festivals might seem a shabby contrast to the frequently repeated promise that marble monuments and bronze 'livres de la gloire' would 'éterniser la mémoire de ces martyrs', but for most of the decade, cardboard and plaster was all that could be spared.²⁵⁹ While the constant drain on the nation's resources made it difficult to commemorate with any dignity, the 'instabilité dans les pouvoirs' that the war exacerbated rendered remembrance even more problematic. One after another, the factions rose and fell, and one after another, they disavowed the monumental plans of their predecessors, deriding the 'gigantesque puérilité' of the subjects they had proposed and dismissing the resulting designs as inherently 'défectueux'.²⁶⁰ As régimes came and went and constitutions were written and revoked, events inevitably overtook the artists' attempts to commemorate the Revolution on canvas or to honour its dead in stone. Having been designed with an obsolete political agenda in mind, their designs were dispatched to gather dust in the archives of the *Institut*, while the plaster models they raised were abandoned to the tender mercies of the elements or the less forgiving impulses of the *jeunesse dorée*.²⁶¹

Time and money; the Revolution never had enough of either, but even these deficiencies still seem inadequate to the task of explaining the Revolution's failure to honour its war dead. The 'succession rapide des événements' and the recurrent

²⁵⁹ Daubermesnil, *Motion d'ordre sur les moyens de vivifier l'esprit public, et sur les honneurs à décerner aux défenseurs de la Patrie, du 29 ventôse an IV*, (Paris, an IV) B. L. F.R. 371, no. 24, p. 8.

²⁶⁰ *Extrait du Procès-Verbal du Jury des Arts ou Rapport fait au Comité d'Instruction Publique sur les prix que le Jury a décernés aux ouvrages de Peinture, Sculpture et Architecture soumis à son jugement... le 21 prairial an III*, A. N. F17/1057, no. 3, article 2.

²⁶¹ For the decision to dispatch the designs submitted to the *concours* of the year II to the archives of the Institut, see Portiez, *Rapport fait au nom du Comité d'Instruction Publique*, p. 6.

financial crises that crippled one assembly after another all contributed to the Revolutionaries' failure to make good their promises to remember the dead, but ultimately, the very first factor in Thibaudeau's account may have been the most decisive. After a Terror when most people were probably satisfied, like Sieyès, with simply having survived, perhaps the living really were 'trop occupés d'eux-mêmes pour songer aux morts.' It seems a callous conclusion to draw, and perhaps for the politicians who continued to make promises on behalf of posterity that they had neither the resources nor the resolve to honour, callousness is the most appropriate term. And yet, callousness, however convenient it might seem, is not enough to account for the neglect that Thibaudeau attempted to explain because while the deputies repeatedly reneged on their promises to remember the nation's dead, the public they represented increasingly did the same.

It is only one man's testimony, but Célestin Guittard de Floriban's diary of the years that followed Thermidor would seem to bear Thibaudeau's verdict out. Having conscientiously attended as many Revolutionary festivals and celebrated as many Republican heroes as his deteriorating health would allow up to 1794, he simply ceased to bother after *an II*. Guittard was no zealot and he did not mourn the ending of the Terror. Indeed, his mounting sense of disenchantment might even be traced back to the lengthening lists of the guillotined that occupy such a prominent place in his record of the bloody summer of *an II*. Nor did he withdraw entirely from the world of public events in *nonante-cinq*, but while he wearily recorded Marat's fall from grace in February and dutifully voted for the Constitution in September, politics and its pageantry intruded less and less frequently upon a diary that became progressively more preoccupied with the demands of day-to-day existence. As the detailed descriptions of processions and crudely drawn sketches of ceremonies that punctuate his account of the years from 1791 to 1794 disappeared from his journal, their place was taken by the grim particulars of one old man's struggle to stay alive in the face of unbridled inflation and chronic shortages. Having just noted that the price of butter had risen to 100 *francs* a pound, Guittard's last reference to a Revolutionary ritual in 1795 was an embittered one. Surveying the formal installation of the Directory that November, he concluded indignantly: 'Au milieu de tout ce faste nous

manquons du pain!’²⁶² In his disillusion, and it was so widely shared in 1795, he increasingly sought solace in the company of family and friends, in the religious services that had just resumed in Saint-Sulpice, and in the memory of the wife who had died thirteen years before.²⁶³ The Revolution, beyond an occasional ‘Quelle République, Grand Dieu!’, its rituals and the memory of its heroes, no longer mattered to Célestin Guittard.²⁶⁴

Indifference: the word seems to encapsulate Célestin Guittard’s retreat into a world of personal affairs and private memories after Thermidor and the same word recurs repeatedly in descriptions of the public mood thereafter. Whether borne out of exhaustion or inconstancy, (Mallet du Pan’s preferred explanation) cynicism or despair, and from 1795 onwards there was plenty to be both cynical and despondent about, the public displayed ‘plus indifférence que d’opposition’ to the Republic and its rites throughout the Directory.²⁶⁵ The authorities struggled determinedly, if increasingly desperately, against this overwhelming tide of apathy, adding athletic contests and chariot races to the solemnities that were supposed to express their ‘reconnaissance pour les fondateurs de la République et ses braves défenseurs’ but these attempts to entice spectators back onto the Champ de Mars had little effect.²⁶⁶ While crowds might come for the thrill of the games and the delights of the dancing that followed, the ‘gaité’ and good humour they displayed bespoke neither regard for the Republic nor reverence for its dead, just the pursuit of the thoroughly self-absorbed pleasure that was the hallmark of the Directorial *monde*.²⁶⁷ Like the aristocratic ‘bals des victimes’ that even Duval denounced as an ‘indécence’ travesty of the respect due to the dead, a longing for diversion rather than a desire to remember set the tone for these ceremonies, and even then, many Parisians still felt that ‘ces

²⁶² Guittard de Floriban, *Journal d’un bourgeois de Paris*, p. 570.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 496, 498, 559 and 583.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p. 575.

²⁶⁵ See for example, Mallet du Pan, *Correspondance Inédit*, p. 50, Meister, *Souvenirs de mon dernier voyage à Paris*, p. 66, and the prefect of the Seine’s complaints about the apathetic mood of the Parisian public in early an IX in F. Rocquain, ed. *L’État de la France au 18 brumaire*, (Paris, 1874) p. 285. Aulard, *Paris pendant la réaction*, vol. v, p. 579.

²⁶⁶ Having just seen Reubell solemnly place a laurel wreath on an obelisk ‘en l’honneur des braves qui renversèrent le trône’, the crowd that assembled on the Champ de Mars for the anniversary of August 10th in 1798 was then treated to a series of athletic contests and horse races. Aulard, *Paris pendant la réaction*, vol. v, pp. 35-6.

²⁶⁷ *Le Clef du Cabinet*, 25 thermidor an VI, cited in *ibid.*, p. 37.

fêtes viennent trop souvent pour aller au-delà de sa fenêtre pour les voir'.²⁶⁸ In their more realistic moments, even the authorities admitted as much.²⁶⁹ In its anxiety to win the public's acceptance, and its esteem was probably too much to hope for, the Directory had transformed the commemoration of the dead into a circus, a tawdry spectacle that demeaned the memory of the men it claimed to honour, but in Paris at least, these ceremonies still provided the pretext for an entertaining day out. Beyond the capital, as cash-strapped cantons and dispirited départemental officials lurched from one crisis, one coup, and one increasingly shabby ceremony to the next, few provincials had even this consolation.

Nicolas Rogue's recollection of Évreux's 'pompe funèbre' in memory of Hoche in October 1797 is evidence of this. Unimpressed by the 'petit nombre' of guardsmen and *invalides* who composed the cortège and uninspired by the civil servants' speeches that concluded the afternoon's events, Évreux's phlegmatic basket-weaver simply went home. He had seen and heard it all too many times before to be either moved or exhilarated, and 'après la cérémonie faite, on revint chez soi.'²⁷⁰ Rogue was a good Revolutionary; the mere fact that he was still attending these rites long after most of his compatriots had ceased to show up is proof enough of that. However, his laconic account of Évreux's celebration of Hoche's memory is not the reaction of a man who has been roused to wage an unending 'guerre à l'Autriche et à l'Angleterre' or even been persuaded to urge others to do the same.²⁷¹ It is, instead, a measure of the disenchantment that the Directory's over-administered and under-attended civic ceremonies struggled so hard to conceal in the capital, but that the authorities were unable to disguise in the provinces, as the steadily shrinking spaces required for those ceremonies would suggest. As the crowds attending these ceremonies contracted, and who had the time for such distractions during the harvest

²⁶⁸ While Schechter suggests that the *bals des victimes* were merely a morbid by-product of the 19th century's taste for the gothic, Mercier's detailed, and extremely indignant, description of this 'amusement bizarre' from 1798 and Duval's outraged account of this 'scandale révoltante' tend to undermine his argument that the *bals des victimes* were no more than a macabre legend. R. Schechter, 'Gothic Thermidor: the bals des victimes, the fantastic and the production of historical knowledge in post-Terror France', *Representations*, vol. 61 (1998) pp. 78-94, Mercier, *Le Nouveau Paris*, pp. 337-40, and Duval, *Souvenirs thermidoriennes*, vol. ii, pp. 72-80, p. 77. Meyer noted this possibly apocryphal, but still suggestive, comment in May 1798. Meyer, *Fragments sur Paris*, p. 149.

²⁶⁹ Writing in fructidor an VII, the Minister of the Interior, Quinette, expressed his concern that, by 'en multipliant ainsi des fêtes... on se fatigue le peuple.' A. N. F1c1/113, no. 89.

²⁷⁰ N.-P.-C. Rogue, *Souvenirs et Journal d'un bourgeois d'Évreux, 1740-1830*, (Évreux, 1850) p. 126.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

months of fructidor and vendémiaire, so smaller and smaller venues were required for the Republic's ritual life, until by the autumn of *an VIII*, many official fêtes could be contained within the confines of the town hall or *temple décadaire*.²⁷² This retreat from the wide, open spaces required for the Revolution's earlier festivities mirrors the public's increasing disengagement from Directorial politics, but it is also a reflection of the war-weariness that progressively eroded whatever remained of Revolutionary *esprit public* after the Terror. For a public that thought of little but peace, ceremonies that invariably ended with another call to arms could hold few charms.²⁷³ After *an II*, France had had, as Cobb remarked, 'a surfeit of death', and the idea of dying for the Republic had lost whatever allure it had once possessed.²⁷⁴ Indeed, for most people, for the *sans-culottes* who had been so comprehensively crushed in *an III* and the *honnêtes gens* who never even bothered to vote let alone dispatch their sons to the front, for the women left waiting for pensions that never came and the hundreds of thousands of young men who took to the hills rather than join the ranks of *nos braves défenseurs*, this was no longer a Republic worth dying for.

Rogue's dispirited return 'chez soi' is, above all, redolent of the 'retreat from fantasy' and the 'return to private values' that began immediately after Thermidor and that gathered pace throughout the Directory.²⁷⁵ Quantifying a fantasy's faltering grip on the public imagination is, of necessity, an elusive enterprise, but the collapse in the commerce of commemoration seems as good a guide as any to the end of the illusion. By 1798, the cheap political prints and clumsy commemorative portraits that had formed such a staple of the engravers' trade in the early years of the Revolution had all but disappeared. Surveying the print-maker's displays on the quai Voltaire that summer, Frederick Meyer noted that

²⁷² This withdrawal to the sanctuary of the *temple décadaire* had already accomplished in towns like Évreux and Auxerre by 1797, although in larger centres, and especially garrison towns like Lunéville where a large number of troops could be assembled for the occasion, the commemorations continued to be staged on the local Champ de Mars. Rogue, *Souvenirs*, p. 126, and for Lunéville, see the *Procès-verbal de la cérémonie funèbre qui a eu lieu au Champ de Mars à Lunéville, le 30 vendémiaire an VI*, (Lunéville, an VI) A. N. AD VIII, 19.

²⁷³ As one police spy noted in late 1796: 'Dans les conversations, dans les cafés on n'entend que ces mots: "toujours des victoires et point de paix. Quand viendra-t-elle?". Aulard, *Paris pendant la réaction*, vol. iii, p. 367. For a selection of similar sentiments, see *ibid.*, pp. 339, 361, 497, and 783, and Guittard de Floriban, *Journal*, p. 590.

²⁷⁴ R. Cobb, 'Thermidor or the retreat from Fantasy', in *History and Imagination: essays in honour of Trevor Roper*, (London, 1981) pp. 272-95, p. 285.

²⁷⁵ Cobb, 'Thermidor or the retreat from Fantasy', p. 286.

les estampes innombrables qui ont paru pendant la Révolution, et qui y avaient trait, sont disparues. Je n'ai vu qu'une mauvaise estampe représentant l'attaque des Thuilleries du 10 août, j'en ai inutilement cherché plusieurs autres, ainsi que les portraits des hommes devenus célèbres par la révolution. On ne trouve plus.²⁷⁶

There was no longer any money to be made from the implausibly heroic poses and improbably inspiring last words that had glorified death throughout the year II, and the printers sensibly reverted to the subjects that had sold so well in the past, sentimental scenes and sacred icons. Deprived of the enthusiasm that had paid for portraits and busts in 1789 and 1791 and denied the subsidies that had sustained the impressive print-runs of the year II, the once-flourishing market in Revolutionary remembrance had simply ceased to exist.

For the people who had once purchased these prints, for people like Nicolas Rogue and Célestin Guittard and the Parisians who had been 'trompés tant de fois par de belles promesses qui n'ont rien produit', the business of living had become difficult enough during the Revolution without constantly being reminded that dying for the Republic was a glorious fate.²⁷⁷ Besides, there was too much evidence to the contrary, too many disfigured veterans, young widows and orphaned children wandering the streets, too many rotting plaster monuments, unpaid pensions and broken promises, for this particular fantasy to inspire any more.²⁷⁸ Like the Parisians who followed the progress of the war with neither 'joie ni inquiétude' but only 'avec indifférence', and the peasant boys who preferred to see their names inscribed on the draft-dodger's *tableau d'ignominie* rather than risk adding another line to a non-existent *livre de gloire*, most people had, as Thibaudeau eventually realised, 'bien autre chose à faire'.²⁷⁹ The Revolution had gone on too long. It had made too many demands, taken too many lives and delivered too little in return to do anything other than turn one's back on the ceremonial and return 'chez soi'.

²⁷⁶ A handful of these prints continued to appear throughout the Directory, but Meyer's testimony suggests that their appeal was limited. Meyer, *Fragments sur Paris*, p. 21.

²⁷⁷ *Messenger du Soir*, 2 prairial an III, cited in Aulard, *Paris pendant la réaction*, vol. i, p. 735.

²⁷⁸ Although the politician in Mercier still assumed that the sight of so many 'soldats estropiés' in Paris could not but inspire young men to take up arms, the reality of revolutionary recruitment would seem to suggest otherwise. Mercier, *Le Nouveau Paris*, pp. 686-9.

²⁷⁹ Aulard, *Paris pendant la réaction*, vol. v, p. 578.

CONCLUSION

The Revolution did not keep many of its promises to remember, but it did prove successful in one sphere at least. After a decade of *journées* and massacres, coups and campaigns, the Revolution had proved itself remarkably adept at creating widows. By 1796, fifteen new widows had appeared on Grenoble's rue Saint Laurent alone, and there is no reason to believe that this street's experience was in any way exceptional.¹ By the year X, ten thousand women had succeeded where many more had failed and been awarded a war-widows' pension, but this figure, like the pension itself, hardly does justice to the scale of human suffering the war produced on the home front.² Half a million French soldiers died during the Revolutionary wars; the Empire claimed nearly twice as many again, and while most of these went to their deaths unmarried, many left behind women, wives, mothers, lovers, with good reason to reflect on the relationship between the Revolution and the remembrance of the dead.³ After so many stirring ceremonies, earnest *éloges* and papier-mâché monuments, after so many *grands hommes*, so many Jacobins, Feuillants, Montagnards, and Directors, all men of course, it seems appropriate to conclude with the thoughts of two widows on the meaning of remembrance in Revolutionary France.

In October 1793, Mme Boulliand of the rue de Grenelle St. Honoré decided to write to the Committee of Public Safety:

¹ K. Norberg, *Rich and Poor in Grenoble, 1600-1814*, (Berkeley, 1985) p. 286.

² Woloch, *The French Veteran*, p. 103.

³ Corvisier, 'La mort du soldat depuis la fin du Moyen Age', p. 16.

on a l'honneur de proposer au Comité de Salut Public un tableaux qui parlera au cœurs et aux yeux de tous les français et des Étrangers, en honorant la mémoire des héros morts pour la liberté, et la valeur de ceux qui sont vivant.⁴

The *tableau* in question is an awkwardly written, clumsily illustrated description of the *Place de la Révolution* transformed into a garden of remembrance in honour of the nation's war dead. In Mme Boulliard's blueprint, a combination of lawns and pathways encircle a network of statues dedicated to the heroes of the Revolution, she specifies 'Le pelletier, Marat and D'ampierre', while a variety of orange trees, fountains and pergolas provide a little shade for the weary visitor. At the centre of the square, a statue of *Liberté* rises above the trees with, at its base, an urn bearing the remains of an unknown soldier who has died in defence of freedom.⁵ Seven columns stand around this statue, each one bearing a series of medallions inscribed with the names of the dead and wounded, 'les citoyens vertueux qui sont morts et ont versé leur sang pour la défense de la liberté'. It was a simple enough plan, and the expense, she insisted, would not be great. Stone would suffice for the statuary; bronze, after all, had more pressing uses in the year II, and her own rough sketch could be forwarded to 'le célèbre David' to put the finishing touches in place.

In so many respects, this is just one of any number of well-intentioned memorials designed between 1789 and 1799. Less expensive than Quatremère's Panthéon, less needy than Verhelst's begging letter masquerading as a design for a *jardin allégorique*, and less far-fetched than Aubry's preposterous plan for an immense commemorative pyramid located at the geographical centre of France, there is absolutely nothing exceptional about this proposal.⁶ Its tone is typically deferential, its content makes all the right gestures to the prevailing political orthodoxy, and the design is, as usual, rather inept. It could have been composed by any one of the hundreds of artists, architects, and generally concerned citizens who sought an official's imprimatur for their commemorative ideas over the course of that turbulent decade. In its sheer ordinariness, the *citoyenne* Boulliard's contribution to the Revolutionary debate on remembrance is utterly unremarkable. And yet, her letter is

⁴ A. N. F/13/207, letter from the Citoyenne veuve Boulliard to the Comité de Salut Public, 26 vendémiaire, l'an II.

⁵ This is presumably the same *Liberté* that had been designed by David for 1793's *fête de la Réunion*. Guillaume, *C. I. P.* vol. ii, pp. 73-5. The urn and accompanying statues of Immortality and Victory are, however, Mme Boulliard's own additions.

⁶ Aubry, *Projet d'un Monument à la Gloire des Défenseurs de la Liberté*, (an V) A. N. AD VIII-34.

different. Quatremère commemorated with a view to bringing the Revolution under control, Verhelst remembered with an eye to personal profit, and Aubry's triumphalist fantasy was borne out of fear of Parisian mobs rather than respect for fallen Frenchmen, but Madame Boulliand had good reason to remember the Revolution's dead.⁷ As a widow herself, there is a personal dimension to her call for a memorial that transcends the normal platitudes of Revolutionary remembrance. Certainly, all the usual clichés are present. The poplar makes its routine appearance and the heroes of the day are given their customary due, but there is a sincerity in those misspelt tributes and a poignancy in her insistence that bronze and marble are not required to honour the dead that suggest that this letter was not composed with a view to either partisan advantage or private gain. Singularly lacking in the self-assurance and bombast that characterised most such schemes, the widow Boulliand did not promise that her garden of remembrance would persuade thousands to take up arms, nor insist that it would be an inspiring *école des vertus civiques*. Her ambitions were more modest than this. She spoke of acknowledging ordinary soldiers, of honouring the debt a nation owed its men at arms, and implicitly, of comforting the women they left behind. Doubtless, the *citoyenne veuve* Boulliand, to use her full title, could have benefited from some of the bounty of official patronage; but this was no begging letter, just a plea for some recognition and a little respect. Collot d'Herbois forwarded her letter on to the Minister of the Interior and the matter was never heard of again.

In one sense, the widow Boulliand's modest little proposal is an object lesson in the way the Revolution democratised the politics of commemoration. For a woman, and a not especially educated one at that, to have decided to write this letter is testimony to the extent to which ordinary French men and women became part in the politics of memory from 1789 onwards. Like the *clubistes* of Chateaudun's unsuccessful appeal for the erection of a *monument aux morts* in every town in the Republic, Mme Boulliand's letter illustrates the degree to which the *ancien régime* debate on the commemoration of the dead escaped the elitist confines of the enlightened salon and the academy to engage an entirely new public in the 1790s. As the organisers of commemorative ceremonies, and as participants in discussions about how those

⁷ Central to Aubry's logic, if that is the right word, was a sense that Paris had been 'souillé' by too many massacres and *journées*, and that his new town would offer the Directory a refuge from the demands of the Parisian populace. Ibid. p. 4-5.

ceremonies should be held and who they should honour, the newly expanded political nation embarked upon a constantly evolving debate concerning commemoration in 1789, a debate that involved both the forms remembrance should take and the ends it should serve. From 1789 onwards, this debate was conducted in the assemblies and the Jacobin clubs, in the press and the popular societies, but above all it was played out on the streets where the widest public possible made its own choices about the commemoration of the Revolution's dead. As contributors to collections, wearers of mourning and purchasers of political souvenirs, as spectators, and even as absentees, and turning one's back on a parade is surely as political an act as attending one, ordinary men and women, in both Paris and the provinces, were drawn into the politics of collective memory as never before. The politics of remembrance were opened up to a wider public after 1789. And yet, the democratisation of memory also mirrored the evolution of Revolutionary politics in general. Like the extension of self-government to the nation as a whole, this process proved to be slow, unsteady and ultimately ephemeral, and as the democratic movement went into decline after *an II*, so active popular participation in the Republic's rites of remembrance waned under the Directory only to collapse entirely under the centralising impetus of the Consulate and Empire. By September 1800, as Napoleon marked the eight anniversary of the foundation of the Republic by installing Turenne's body in *les Invalides*, the public had been reduced to the rôle of passive spectator once more.

Mme Boulliard's decision to write this letter does bear witness to a transformation in the politics of memory, but that transformation was short-lived. It was also, and the fate of Mme Boulliard's letter and Châteaudun's petition illustrates this point, superficial. More and more people did become actively involved in the commemorative process between 1789 and 1794, but in terms of the men the Revolution chose to commemorate, and with one or two very fleeting exceptions women never made the grade, successive Revolutionary assemblies proved remarkably reluctant to democratise the meaning of memory. The National Assembly thought little of raising a Panthéon to one of its own or of rescuing David's *Serment du Jeu de Paume* from financial collapse or of honouring Voltaire, but it had been very slow to acknowledge the *vainqueurs* in 1789, and very quick to suppress the commemoration of their sacrifice the following year. The Legislative Assembly's attitude was hardly any different. In 1792, it had honoured Guillaume Simonneau in

order to condemn the popular movement and while a rump of the assembly assented to Robespierre's call to commemorate the dead of August 10th, the real impulse to honour them came from the insurrectionary Commune and the sections. After Thermidor, and more especially after prairial *an III*, the ghosts of past *journées* were an even less welcome presence on the Revolutionary stage, and having codified their contempt for 'flagorneries populaires' in the constitution of the year III, the *conventionnels* reneged on their earlier plans to honour the *sectionnaires* who had given their lives to establish the Republic.⁸ The Directory inherited this mantle of disdain. Lacking any real *raison d'être* beyond conquest and pillage, the Directory heaped laurels on the generals who brought home the most booty while studiously ignoring the corpses of the men they commanded. All too often, they harboured disagreeably Jacobin sentiments, and in any case, a Republic that denied the vote to most of the men it expected to die on its behalf could never admit that *les maigres* had any place in the roll call of Revolutionary heroism.

For all its many flaws, the Republic of the year II was the one Revolutionary régime that might ever have entertained the widow Boulliard's self-effacing scheme to honour the memory of the common soldier. As the only régime to claim, however disingenuously, that 'la véritable génie est sans-culotte', as the régime of the *Recueil* and the *concours* of *an II*, of Bara and Viala, it did attempt to commemorate a new class of hero.⁹ And yet, even among the *conventionnels* of *an II*, Mme Boulliard's letter, like Châteaudun's call for cenotaphs in honour of 'ses enfants morts' went unheeded. For all that these initiatives honoured the only heroes who stood above the factionalism that engulfed the memory of the martyred deputy and the polemics that overwhelmed the commemoration of the *philosophes*, these schemes were also impossibly naïve. The men who decided the direction of commemoration in the Convention, the former eulogists on the Committee of Public Safety and the savants of the Committee of Public Instruction, were too much the heirs to d'Angiviller's *Grands Hommes*, to Boullée's monuments to Newtonian genius, to Thomas' *éloges* and Girardin's statuary to ever countenance monuments such as these. This is not to

⁸ In justifying the restricted franchise of the new constitution, Lanjuinais had asked, without challenge: 'Appellerons-nous à l'exercice des droits politiques les hommes qui n'ont rien, quoique le besoin les mette à la merci du premier qui les paie? Le temps des flagorneries populaires est passé; nous répondrons par la négative.' *A. M.* no. 295, 25 messidor III, p. 196.

⁹ Grégoire, *Rapport... présenté au nom du Comité d'Instruction Publique à la séance du 8 août*, (Paris,

suggest that the failure of Mme Boulliand's design was primarily artistic, for it was not. In its own chaotic way, her combination of cypress trees and cenotaphs was just as competent as, and certainly no less clumsy than, any of the more accomplished designs that were submitted to the Revolution's successive *concours*. Rather, her failure was political. By placing an anonymous soldier at the centre of her garden of remembrance, a man whose life had been as unremarkable as his death had been unexceptional, she had broken the cardinal rule of commemoration in eighteenth-century France. For a political class in thrall to the pedagogic potential of the exemplary hero and mesmerised by the inspirational iconography of the 'significant moment', the dead had to serve, and be seen to serve, a clearly defined political purpose. In choosing to honour an unknown and undistinguished casualty of war and in emphasising the consolation that commemoration might afford the living rather than the propaganda potential the dead might be made to convey, Mme Boulliand had failed to grasp this fact. The dead, if they did not serve the politicians' ends, did not merit their attention, and death, the death of a Bara or a Viala, could never be allowed to speak for itself. Words, someone else's words, purporting to be their own, had to be made to invest their memory with a political significance that the death of a child should never have had to bear.

Even in *an II*, perhaps especially in *an II*, commemoration was, as it had been under the *ancien régime*, and would be for the assorted monarchies, Empires and Republics that succeeded it, primarily an instrument of political power. Just as d'Angiviller's *Grands Hommes* had been designed to enhance the authority of an increasingly uncertain absolutism, just as Thomas' *éloges* were written to stake the claims of the savant to be the saviour of mankind, so the dead had a part to play in Revolutionary politics. Whether planned with the legitimisation of the new order, the denunciation of the old or the mobilisation of the masses in mind, and most forms of commemoration attempted to perform all three, the Revolution's funeral festivals and monumental *concours* were designed by politicians primarily to suit their own ends. Perhaps the tearful *baisers fraternels* with which the *conventionnels* greeted the arrival of some mutilated unfortunate from the frontiers had led Mme Boulliand to

think otherwise, but a Republic that advised widows to 'sechez vos larmes... point de larmes pusillanimes', or that counselled mothers to avoid indulging in:

un attendrissement étrange
de vous targuer vous auriez tort.

did not commemorate its dead in order to console those they left behind.¹⁰ Sentiment, of course, did play a rôle in Revolutionary remembrance. The agonies of fallen heroes and the anguish of the bereaved were the stock in trade of the Revolutionary eulogist, but if these themes were invariably treated in exuberant detail, it was only as an overture to the ever-present call to arms. Even within the Convention that lavished such unprecedented attention on the welfare of the war-widow, the new political class was too enamoured of the legendary Spartan mother who ignored her sons' fate to ask only if the battle had been won to really consider the feelings of the French mothers who shed these 'larmes pusillanimes.' Grief, the grief that indulged in that unacceptable 'attendrissement', and respect, the respect that inspired Mme Boulliard and the *clubistes* of Châteaudun to call for cenotaphs in memory of the heroes the politicians had forgotten, could never be allowed to overshadow the more pressing requirements of a Republic at war.

Even in *an II*, the need to make the memory of the dead serve a well-defined political purpose set clear limits on the democratisation of Revolutionary remembrance. Perhaps more importantly, the forms commemoration took after 1793 were even more socially and culturally exclusive. From the summer of 1791 onwards, the Revolution had, at first by accident but later by design, sought to break the link between the faith of the living and the remembrance of the dead. Initially, the secularisation of Revolutionary memory had been confined to the commemoration of the new régime's *Grands Hommes*: the political and philosophical elect who were honoured in the Panthéon's vaults and the assemblies' speeches. However, as Revolutionary politics progressively invaded every aspect of private life the same principle was steadily extended to encompass the commemoration of ordinary men and women who had lived out unremarkable lives in every corner of France. By the autumn of 1792, as the

¹⁰ Pithou de Loinville, *Description générale et Historique des objets qui ont servi à la Pompe funèbre, célébrée le 26 août aux Tuileries, pour honorer la mémoire des Patriotes, qui se sont sacrifiés pour faire triompher la Liberté de la France...* (Paris, 1792) B.N. Lb39 10862, pp. 2-3, and F. P. A. Léger, *L'Apothéose du Jeune Barra: Tableau Patriotique en un acte, mêlé d'ariettes, représenté sur le théâtre de la rue Feydeau, le 17 prairial an II*, (Paris, 1794) act I, scene VI, p. 19.

Commune honoured the heroes of August 10th with a torch-lit ceremony on the Place du Carrousel and the Parisian public looked to their churches to consecrate their memory, the civic and the sacred aspects of commemoration had been sundered, but they could still co-exist. However, this uneasy compromise did not last for long, and as the churches closed and the statues of *Sommeil* went up during the Terror, the customary religious culture of death and remembrance was swept aside. A sense of the sacred did not disappear from the Republic's rites of memory, the ambiguities that enveloped the cult of Marat are evidence enough of that, but from the winter of *an II* onwards, religion, as the majority of French men and women understood it, had no place in the remembrance of the dead, however undistinguished they might be. In order to understand what this process meant, it is necessary to turn to the reflections of another widow on what the remembrance of the dead meant in a time of Revolution.

A few months after the *citoyenne* Boulliard dispatched her well-meaning missive to the Committee, another widow makes an equally fleeting appearance in the records of Revolutionary officialdom. On 6 germinal year II, Mme Courbet, a thirty-three year old cotton-spinner, was hauled before the *comité de surveillance* of Étrépagne in the Eure. Her offence had been sung during a sitting of the *société populaire* the day before:

On conduit un corps au tombeau
Sans lui dire aucune prière
On le pose comme un huguenot
A pourrir dans la terre.

The song, she explained, had been composed in protest at the Parisian *armée révolutionnaire's* iconoclastic expedition through upper Normandy that winter. Doubting that an illiterate rustic, and a woman at that, could have the wit to come up with such telling verse, and sensing a clerical conspiracy to subvert the reign of Reason, the *comité* pressed her as to the real author of the piece, but to no avail. Mme Courbet insisted that the song was all her own work, and explained that she occasionally earned 'quelques assignats' by singing it in public.¹¹

¹¹ Quoted in Cobb, *Les Armées Révolutionnaires*, vol. ii, p. 647, note 25.

A year after Mme Courbet's arrest, and long after the offending *armées* had been wound up, Gaspard Delamelle's *Réflexions sur l'enterrement de ma mère* introduced a polite readership to a similar sense of revulsion for the authorities' unfeeling contempt for the memory of the dead.¹² With its vivid account of drunken porters dragging a mother's coffin to a cemetery that was more like a sewer than a place of repose, and its scathing sketch of a civil servant's indifference to a son's loss, Delamelle's pamphlet was a searing indictment of the sordid realities of burial in the year II.¹³ It ended, as such treatises invariably did, with an appeal to the nation's legislators to restore some dignity to the funeral cortège, and to remember the respect due to the dead, to 'l'humanité, la société et la vertu.'¹⁴ In the spring of 1795, Delamelle's public-spirited indignation captured the prevailing mood acutely, and in the years that followed, a steady stream of speeches, essays and even poems echoed his outrage and repeated his call for action.¹⁵ While a few commentators confined themselves to highlighting the threat to public health these pestilential 'charnières' posed, most went much further in their condemnation of the year II's legacy in the cemetery.¹⁶ The political life of the nation, it was repeatedly claimed, was diminished, public morality degraded and private sentiment demeaned by 'l'indécence actuelle des sépultures'.¹⁷

At first glance, the *Réflexions* seems the more important text. Mme Courbet was an uneducated peasant and her song was probably never heard beyond the confines of her own village, and then, only by a few rustics like herself. By contrast, Delamelle was an accomplished writer, an adept in the language of tears, and his polished appeal to outraged filial sentiment reached a national audience through several editions. Perhaps more importantly, Delamelle's intervention had the advantage of being

¹² *Réflexions sur l'enterrement de ma mère, ou sur les cérémonies des Funérailles et la moralité, des Institutions civils en général*, (Paris, an III) B. L. F.1083.27.

¹³ Delamelle played on his readers' *sensibilité* to full effect, but there is no reason to doubt the essential accuracy of his account. Duval's description of coffins propped up outside the taverns of the rue St. Victor en route to Clamart painted an equally squalid picture. Duval, *Souvenirs*, vol. iv, pp. 319-21.

¹⁴ Delamelle, *Réflexions*, p. 8.

¹⁵ Delamelle's pamphlet was particularly well received in the press. See, for example, Trouvé's review in the *Moniteur*. A. M. no. 206, 26 germinal an III, p. 202.

¹⁶ Lafargue's contribution to the debate, for example, was primarily motivated by questions of public health. *Motion de l'ordre de Lafargue (de la Gironde) sur la police des cimetières*, (Paris, an VII) B. L. F.1083.5, p. 2.

¹⁷ F.-A. Daubermesnil, *Rapport fait au nom d'une commission spécial sur les inhumations, le 21*

rather better timed than Mme Courbet's. By germinal *an III*, when the *Réflexions* first appeared, criticism of the Terror's callous disregard for the dead had become positively *de rigueur*, and Delamelle's public-spirited indignation sparked off yet another round in the century's interminable debate on the honours due to the dead.¹⁸

For both Ariès and Etlin, the debate Delamelle launched represents a real 'turning point' in the history of the Parisian cemetery.¹⁹ And yet, to those who had followed the eighteenth century's assorted attempts to reform the nation's cemeteries, many of the claims that were made during this debate had a reassuringly familiar ring to them. The *corbeaux* who carted the dead to their graves had long been renowned for their insobriety and the *fosse commune* had been fetid for quite some time, but after *an II*, it was convenient to pretend that these calamities were all Robespierre's doing. With the reaction against the Terror in full swing, attributing the state of the nation's graves to the depravity of dechristianising demagogues or the 'fâcheuse égalité' of the year II was both easy and expedient, especially if one had very little to offer as an alternative.²⁰ And the absence of any real alternative is perhaps the defining feature of the Directory's diverse attempts to restore 'l'ordre, la décence, la dignité' to the cemetery.²¹ This is not simply a question of the endlessly recycled plans for 'champs de repose', 'bocages tranquilles' and 'bois sacrés' that a host of *bien-pensant* authors submitted to the *Institut* for its seal of approval.²² These authors' vision of the graveyard as a garden of remembrance had been a commonplace for decades, and it would be unreasonable to expect the Republic's literati to have deviated radically from this well-worn ideal. When even Chateaubriand could broadly agree with La

brumaire an V, (Paris, an V) B. N. Le43/573, p. 1.

¹⁸ From the publication of Delamelle's *Réflexions* in germinal *an III* to the launch of the *Institut*'s essay competition on 'les cérémonies à faire pour les funérailles' five years later, this debate rumbled on relentlessly throughout the closing years of the Republic. For the *Institut*'s essay competition in 1801, see P. Hintermeyer, *Politiques de la Mort: tirées du concours de l'Institut, germinal an VIII – vendémiaire an IX*, (Paris, 1981)

¹⁹ Etlin, *The Architecture of Death*, p. 271.

²⁰ Quatremère, *Rapport fait au conseil général, le 15 thermidor an VIII sur l'instruction publique, le rétablissement des bourses, le scandale des inhumations actuelles, l'érection des cimetières, la restitution des tombeaux...* (Paris, 1800) B. N. Lk16/359, p. 22.

²¹ Bontoux, *Des Devoirs à rendre aux morts*, (Paris, an IV) B. N. Le43/4034, p. 4.

²² J. de Cambry, *Rapport sur les sépultures*, Roederer, *Des Institutions funéraires convenables à une République qui permet tous les cultes et n'en adopte aucun...*, (Paris, an IV) B. L. F1085.16, and Legouvé, *La Sépulture*, in G. Legouvé, *Œuvres Complètes*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1826) vol. ii, pp. 161-71.

Revellière's call for 'une certaine simplicité rustique' in the cemetery, the architecture of death was, in reality, the least of the legislators' concerns.²³

Rather, the Republic's inability to overcome the Terror's legacy in the cemetery was primarily ritual. Enlightened *honnêtes gens* and committed Christians might find common cause in condemning the 'scandale' of coffins being dragged through the streets like 'le cadavre d'une bête de somme' and speak with a single voice in denouncing the 'brutalité' with which the Republic disposed of its dead, but they could never agree on how to express their 'respect pour les morts'.²⁴ This was the fundamental problem concerning the cemetery after the Terror, because while *la liberté des cultes* was restored in ventôse an III, crucially, that liberty did not extend to the grave, where the ban on 'les signes extérieurs du culte' and the prohibition on priests appearing in public outlawed the conduct of anything even remotely resembling a Christian burial. Admittedly, the reopening of the churches and the gradual re-emergence of the clergy from hiding or exile in 1795 did permit the celebration of the requiem for the first time in years, but beyond this, the religious legislation of the year III made few concessions to the customary culture of commemoration.²⁵ From the procession of the viaticum through the streets to the bell-ringing that traditionally alerted a community to the death and burial of one of its members, even the most basic elements of a 'decent funeral' remained proscribed by the law concerning 'les signes extérieurs du culte', and the year IV only added to the indignities imposed in an III.²⁶ In germinal an IV, for example, the Councils

²³ La Revellière-Lepeaux, *Du Panthéon et d'un Théâtre Nationale*, p. 8. Few could rival Chateaubriand when it came to extolling the virtues of the humble country graveyard where 'on n'entendait... que le chant du rouge-gorge et le bruit des brebis qui broutaient l'herbe de la tombe de leurs anciens pasteurs.' Chateaubriand, *Génie du Christianisme*, (Paris, 1975 ed.) p. 402.

²⁴ The image of the deceased friend or relative being treated with no more respect than a beast of burden recurred throughout this literature. See for example, Delamalle, *Réflexions*, p. 4, Jourdan's essay in the *Moniteur*, A. M. no. 288, 18 messidor an IV, p. 1150, J.-F. Pilat, *Réflexions sur l'indécence et l'immoralité des inhumations aujourd'hui*, in the *Annales de la Religion*, no. 25, 4 floréal an IV, pp. 577-90 and 601-10, p. 577, La Revellière, *Réflexions sur le culte*, p. 20, Quatremère, *Rapport fait au conseil général, le 15 thermidor an VIII...*, p. 22, Legouvé, *Le Sépulture*, p. 164, and Chateaubriand, *Génie du Christianisme*, (Paris, 1975 ed.) p. 402.

²⁵ This assumes, of course, that an acceptable priest was on hand to perform these services, and this was by no means certain. Where priests were readily available, as in Auxerre, the requiem was celebrated with as much pomp as possible. See, for example, the mass for Thomas Roux in the church of Saint-Etienne in February 1797. 'Journal d'un Auxerrois du 19 novembre 1796 au 7 septembre 1797' *Annuaire historique du département de l'Yonne*, vol. xxx, (1866) pp. 247-91, p. 252.

²⁶ While Grégoire tried to reassure the faithful that the cemetery was, technically, 'un lieu destiné au culte', article iv of the law of 3 ventôse an III belied his benign interpretation by stating that: 'les cérémonies de tout culte sont interdites hors de l'enceinte choisie pour leur exercice.' This position

augmented the Convention's ban on bell-ringing with an extensive array of penalties ranging from imprisonment to deportation.²⁷ In the Cinq-Cents, where *la sonnerie* was either denounced as the clarion call of the *chouan* or dismissed as an 'inutile' ostentation, this was considered a legitimate act of Republican defence, but in communities where the denial of the death knell had always been a mark of disgrace, a burial in silence was a source of the profoundest shame.²⁸ As one of Grégoire's correspondents in the Creuse remarked: 'le peuple chrétien souffre extraordinairement de cette privation', but despite the resentment these regulations provoked, the deputies' determination not to pander to the 'préjugés des habitants des campagnes' on such matters remained constant.²⁹

After the excesses of *an II*, Boissy d'Anglas' counsel: 'surveillez donc ce que vous ne pouvez empêcher, régularisez ce que vous ne pouvez défendre' may have marked a new realism in Republican attitudes towards religion, but it did not represent any attempt at reconciliation, and this festering enmity was nowhere more apparent than in the cemetery.³⁰ There were, inevitably, occasional objections to this consensus in the Councils, but they received short shrift in discussions still dominated by an entrenched antagonism towards Catholicism in all its forms. In July 1796, the former *conventionnel* and *curé rouge*, Coupé de l'Oise, proposed that the law should 'laisser à chacun d'honorer ses morts à sa manière et selon son persuasion', but this fell on the deafest of ears, while Talot's suggestion that the deputies should respect public opinion rather than their own prejudices was shouted down by an indignant Cinq-Cents.³¹ A year later little had really changed, and Camille Jordan's attempt to extend

was vigorously reaffirmed by the law of 7 vendémiaire *an IV*, and by any number of local directives. Grégoire, 'Observations sur les signes extérieurs du Culte, l'usage des cloches et des enterrements', in *Annales de la Religion*, no. 7, 21 frimaire, *an IV*, pp. 155-60, p. 159, and for example, the instructions issued in the Isère in messidor *an III*, *Instruction du directoire du département de l'Isère sur l'exécution des lois des 3 ventôse et 11 prairial an III sur l'exercice des cultes...*, (Grenoble, *an III*)

²⁷ According to the law of 22 germinal *an IV*, the penalties for ringing bells for religious purposes ranged from thirty days to a year in prison, or deportation, if a priest was involved. Debidour, *Recueil des Actes du Directoire*, vol. ii, p. 129.

²⁸ *Opinion d'Eschassieriaux aîné sur le projet relatif à la police des cultes*, (Paris, *an V*) p. 7. The ban on *la sonnerie* was especially resented as it seemed to stamp every death with the stigma traditionally reserved for the suicide or the unrepentant sinner. On the rôle of the death knell in customary funerary culture, see McManners, *Death and the Enlightenment*, pp. 270-80, and Lebrun, *Les Hommes et la mort en Anjou*, pp. 467-9.

²⁹ For the curé of Astaillac's letter to Grégoire, see L. Pérouas and P. d'Hollander, *La Révolution française: une rupture dans le Christianisme? Le cas du Limousin (1775-1822)*, (Paris, 1986) p. 258. *Opinion de F. Lamarque sur la police des cultes*, 23 messidor *an V*, (Paris, *an V*) p. 2.

³⁰ Boissy d'Anglas, *Rapport sur la liberté des cultes*, (Paris, *an III*) p. 6.

³¹ Coupé de l'Oise, *Des Sépultures en politique et en morale*, (Paris, *an IV*) B. N. Le43/4059, p. 9, and

freedom of worship to the cemetery met with much the same fate, albeit after a rather more measured debate.³² Ostensibly, a concern for equality prompted this intransigence, but given the Directory's record on equality in every other sphere, one need not take La Revellière's claim that opening the cemetery to the clergy would allow the rich to 'satisfaire leur orgueil' with extravagant services too seriously.³³ Rather, an all-consuming, and utterly indiscriminate, antipathy towards the clergy, dictated this policy.³⁴ While toleration remained the Republic's guiding principle in theory, in reality, the Directory's brand of neutrality was, as Talot's reproach implied, a very one-sided affair. Mallet du Pan's suggestion that 'quiconque fréquentera la messe est un ennemi de la République' may have been largely wishful thinking, but the fact remains that as the law stood after 1795, anyone attending a Christian funeral was considered, if not exactly counter-revolutionary, then certainly complicit in a crime.³⁵

As established by the Convention and endorsed by the Councils, the sweeping restrictions placed on public worship struck at the heart of what most French men and women understood the remembrance of the dead to mean. In practice, of course, compliance with these regulations depended largely on local circumstances, and from 1795 onwards, local circumstances generally meant the wholesale revival of religious practice and the resumption of the rites that went with it, but from the authorities' point of view, the law was clear.³⁶ And yet, for all the law's clarity, the question of

A. M. no. 298, 28 messidor an IV, p. 1192.

³² Arguing that 'vous ne devez pas seulement les [cultes] souffrir, vous devez les protéger', Jordan's bill proposed a sweeping liberalisation of the laws governing religious worship, particularly those dealing with the cemetery, where he effectively advocated a return to the *status quo ante*. While the debate that ensued was evenly contested, the report was eventually shelved in messidor an V. Camille Jordan, *Rapport sur la Police des Cultes*, (Paris, an V), pp. 5 and 18.

³³ *Réflexions sur le culte, sur les cérémonies civiles et sur les fêtes nationales*, (12 floréal, an VI) in La Revellière-Lépeaux, *Mémoires*, vol. iii, pp. 7-27, p. 20.

³⁴ Despite Grégoire's insistence that his followers remained steadfastly 'soumis aux lois', the remnants of the Constitutional Church were viewed with much the same hostility as their refractory rivals by a Republican elite that still considered the phrase citizen-priest to be a contradiction in terms. As the *commissaire du Directoire exécutif* of the Seine remarked to the Minister of Police in prairial an VI: 'Des prêtres soi-disant constitutionnels... sont tous prêts à nos remettre sous le joug... on ne peut pas espérer d'en faire jamais des républicains; ils seront toujours prêtres et le meilleur prêtre ne vaut rien.' Aulard, *Paris pendant la réaction*, vol. iv, pp. 731-2.

³⁵ Mallet du Pan, *Correspondance avec le cour de Vienne*, pp. 135-6. According to the law of 7 vendémiaire an IV, the penalties for violation of these regulations ranged from fines and imprisonment for lay offenders to deportation for the offending priest. A. M. no. 10, 11 vendémiaire an IV, pp. 78-80.

³⁶ For the religious revival, see in particular, O. Hufton, 'The reconstruction of a church, 1796-1801', in Lewis and Lucas, *Beyond the Terror*, pp. 21-53, S. Desan, *Reclaiming the Sacred: lay religion and popular politics in Revolutionary France*, (Ithaca, 1990). On the widespread resumption of bell-

what should take the place of these proscribed rites remained unanswered, and having resolved that 'rien qui puisse favoriser les prétentions du sacerdoce' could be tolerated in the graveyard, the Directory left itself very little room for manoeuvre concerning the ceremonies that could take place in its imagined Elysian Fields.³⁷ As the denunciations of the year III gave way to the *Rapports* of the year IV and the *Essais* of the year VIII, the Directory's debate on death and remembrance remained firmly wedded to the idea of a strictly secular ceremonial of commemoration, complete with tricolour-draped coffins and municipal officials tastefully festooned with sashes of office and black boutonnières. Certainly, minor modifications were made as the years progressed, but neither Coupé's complaint that the tricolour seemed 'déplacée' on a coffin nor Pilat's scepticism as to whether adding a black plume to a civil servant's hat would add much to the solemnity of proceedings prompted any real response from the authorities.³⁸ For all the Directory's concern to distance the Republic from the depredations of the terrorist past, replacing Chaumette's *Sommeil* with a statue of *Immortalité* at the cemetery gate hardly represented a marked advance on the grim utilitarianism of the year II, particularly when the 'étiquette banale' that accompanied these alterations remained essentially unchanged.³⁹ Certainly, some were a little more adventurous than this, but the sentimental rites espoused by Daubermesnil's *Adorateurs* or Chemin-Dupontès *Théophilanthropes* nevertheless remained committed to the principle that the burial of the dead was essentially a civil affair.⁴⁰

Ariès and Etlin are right in one respect at least. The Directory did witness an extraordinarily prolific conclusion to the century's interminable deliberations on the honours due to the dead. And yet, for all the good intentions the *Institut's* essayists expressed, and the variety of forms their concern for commemorative propriety assumed, there is an eerie sense of unreality about this entire debate. It certainly had little immediate effect on how the dead were buried in Paris, where funerals remained

ringing to mark religious rites during the Directory, see A. Corbin, *Village Bells: sound and meaning in nineteenth century France*, (London, 1999) pp. 26-34.

³⁷ Bontoux, 'Projet de résolution', A. M. no. 298, 28 messidor an IV, pp. 1191-2.

³⁸ Coupé, *Des Sépultures*, p. 4. Pilat's comments were a response to the 'timide' reforms introduced by the département of the Seine in germinal an IV. J.-F. Pilat, *Réflexions sur l'indécence et immoralité des inhumations aujourd'hui*, in *Annales de la Religion*, no. 25, 23 April 1796, pp. 577-90, p. 577.

³⁹ A. M. no. 298, 28 messidor an IV, p. 1191, and Coupé, *Des Sépultures*, p. 11.

⁴⁰ For the *Adorateurs'* last rites, see Mathiez, *La théophilanthropie*, pp. 49-52. For the *Théophilanthropes*, see J.-B. Chemin-Dupontès, *Manuel des Théophilanthropes*, (Paris, an VI) p. 45.

as distastefully remiss in 1799 as they had been at the height of the Terror.⁴¹ More importantly however, this vast outpouring of pamphlets and speeches was almost entirely divorced from the aspirations of what the Concordat would eventually describe as 'la grande majorité des citoyens français'. At the very moment when the mass had become 'un objet de première nécessité' in the capital, and with reports flooding into Paris of provincials returning to their 'ancien culte avec une espèce d'acharnement qui ni les mesures de persuasion ne celles de la sévérité... ne peuvent arrêter', the Directory's quest for decorum in death was entirely predicated upon finding, or creating, some viable alternative to the rites of the Church.⁴² From the repeated efforts to resuscitate the *culte décadaire* to the official endorsement of *théophilanthropie*, the creation of a new ceremonial of death and remembrance was central to the Directory's attempts to forge a civic creed that could simultaneously preach republican values, satisfy the public's 'respect pour des aïeux' and command popular support into the bargain.⁴³

All of these schemes were, particularly in this last respect, pure fantasy. Whether these imagined honours took the form of the libations of milk and honey that the *Adorateurs* cast over the coffins of the deceased or the flowers that the *théophilanthropes* scattered during their arid encomiums hardly mattered. There had never been any *Adorateurs* to bury in the first place, and despite the almost Panglossian assurances of the Parisian police that, with a little patience, La Revellière's patronage would soon bear fruit, there were hardly any more *théophilanthropes* to dispose of, especially after the coup of prairial an VII when that patronage abruptly dried up.⁴⁴ For all the subsequent scholarly attempts to

⁴¹ The situation remained so bad in 1799 that the *Institut* obliged its members to attend their colleagues' interments 'en corps', in order to ensure that at least some of the requisite decencies were observed. Aulard, *Paris pendant la réaction*, vol. v, p. 698 and *Annales de la Religion*, vol. viii, pp. 16-17.

⁴² Aulard, *Paris pendant la réaction*, vol. i, p. 542. For Edme Rathier's indignant account of the religious revival in Auxerre, see H. Forestier, 'Les campagnes de l'Auxerrois et la déchristianisation d'après la correspondance d'Edme-Antoine Rathier agent national du district d'Auxerre (pluviôse an II – germinal an III)', *Annales de Bourgogne*, vol. xix, (1947) pp. 185-206, p. 199.

⁴³ Both Leclerc's speech of 9 fructidor an V and La Revellière's *Réflexions sur le culte* were particularly emphatic about the rôle of remembrance in promoting a civic creed that could articulate republican values within the framework of a pared-down deism or 'religion fondamentale.' *Motion d'Ordre par J.-B. Leclerc sur l'existence et l'utilité d'une religion civile en France*, (Paris, an V) p. 4.

⁴⁴ During the heyday of La Revellière's patronage, the police displayed a touching belief in theophilanthropy's ability to attract recruits, and assured the authorities that the sum of 300 francs was normally enough to establish a thriving presence in any parish. However, a new realism entered their reports in the year VII, when the assertion that il n'y a plus aujourd'hui une seule église à Paris où leur culte ne soit inauguré' was tempered by the bleak prediction that: 'il n'annonce pas une existence

differentiate between the Directory's unsuccessful experiments in deism and Robespierre's equally unappealing Supreme Being, these were only so many variations on the same discredited theme.⁴⁵ As contemporary critics were only quick to point out, they spoke the same stilted language, acted out the same anodyne rituals and provoked essentially the same mixture of indifference and disdain. Beyond the confines of the civil service and a handful of *cercles constitutionnels*, there was, as even the police were eventually forced to admit, no public for these desiccated doctrines and their ostentatiously unadorned rites. Having received the well-funded imprimatur of the triumvirs, Chemin-Dupontès' brand of deism was undoubtedly the most successful of the new cults, but even so, by 1799, the *théophilanthropes*' temples were as empty as the *décadi* was ignored.⁴⁶

Like the cult of the Supreme Being before it, the Directory's attempts to establish a viable alternative to Catholicism ultimately fell victim to a parliamentary coup, but the reasons for its failure were more profound than this. As he surveyed the debris of the *culte décadaire* in the autumn of 1798, one despondent public servant reminded his superiors that the public wanted 'peu de paroles et beaucoup de spectacles.'⁴⁷ Notwithstanding its undeniably dismissive tone, this verdict nevertheless contains a kernel of truth. Words, well meaning no doubt, but esoteric and emotionally unengaging nonetheless, were all the Revolutionary cults had ever had to offer. Selected readings from Confucius and the Koran may have satisfied the cosmopolitan aspirations of the *Décade philosophique*'s subscribers, but for the rest of the population, they were no substitute for relics that possessed the power to heal or sacraments that promised salvation.⁴⁸ They certainly failed to convert the anonymous

durable.' Aulard, *Paris pendant la réaction*, vol. iv, pp. 573 and 732, and vol. v, pp. 99.

⁴⁵ In the most recent discussion of *théophilanthropie*, Livesey insists that 'the parallel... between the cult of the Supreme Being and theophilanthropy cannot be sustained.' However, given the distinctly *robesspierriste* hue of Chemin-Dupontès' publications during the Terror and the *Manuel des théophilanthropes*' very obvious debt to the Incorruptible's definition of key doctrines such as the immortality of the soul, this position seems entirely untenable. It also seems clear that few contemporaries recognised any real doctrinal difference between the two, any more than they would have understood Livesey's claim that *théophilanthropie* enjoyed 'a massive public following.' Livesey, *Making Democracy*, pp. 205 and 207.

⁴⁶ By the winter of the year VII, it had become apparent that the cult was on the verge of extinction. Aulard, *Paris pendant la réaction*, vol. v, pp. 171 and 273.

⁴⁷ Aulard, *Paris pendant la réaction*, vol. v, p. 99.

⁴⁸ Theophilanthropy's key texts carried extensive extracts from a wide array of exotic sources, while expressly prohibiting any form of sacred image in the cult's ostentatiously frugal temples. Chemin-Dupontès, *Morale des sages de tous les pays et de tous les siècles*, (Paris, an VI) B. L. 8411.aa.16. (2) and *Année religieuse des théophilanthropes* ..., (Paris, an VI) B. N. Ld188/5.

diarist in Auxerre who contrasted the *théophilanthropes*' diffident deity with his own experience of the divine in 1797:

Que l'impie dise tout ce qu'il voudra: que Dieu est indifférent sur le cours des astres et qu'il ne le change pas, le chrétien sait et a l'expérience que Dieu se laisse fléchir aux prières qu'il lui adresse et lui accorde souvent plus qu'il ne lui demande...⁴⁹

Neither the cult of Reason nor the Supreme Being, nor any of the Directory's preachy attempts to promote a pared-down *culte civique* could ever offer anything to rival the relationship this man enjoyed with his God, any more than the ceremonies they prescribed could satisfy the needs it imposed. When storms threatened the harvest, the cult of Reason had no rites to avert disaster, and when a town wished to celebrate its deliverance from tyranny, a theophilanthropic service could never compete with a *Te Deum*.⁵⁰

The Revolutionary cults had no answer to the dilemmas of everyday life, and they proved equally inadequate to the task of dealing with death on a daily basis. When salvation was at stake, and this was when the deficiencies of the new cults were most glaringly obvious, the difference between the Republic's diverse forms of deism, like the distinction between Roederer's 'bois sacré' and Legouvé's 'bocage tranquille', was all but irrelevant to most French men and women. The real divide, the only one that actually mattered in this respect, was the clash of cultures that set the beleaguered local officials charged with enforcing the law on religious worship against the determination of their neighbours, and very often their wives, to 'vivre', and more importantly, 'de mourir dans l'exercice de la religion catholique.'⁵¹ For many of these men, confronted by communities in the throes of a religious revival and lacking the means, and frequently the inclination, to enforce the law on so sensitive a subject, discretion was often the better part of valour. In the Sarthe, for example, many mayors turned a judiciously blind eye to the re-appearance of clerics and crucifixes at the head of funeral cortèges on the grounds that they were reluctant to 'casser le col dans leurs communes pour des croix', and this singular lack of zeal was far from

⁴⁹ 'Journal d'un Auxerrois', p. 267.

⁵⁰ Even in Auxerre, one of the few provincial towns to show any interest in theophilanthropy, the Church continued to attract huge congregations, while the attendance at official ceremonies continued to languish. On July 3rd 1797, for example, over 1,200 people attended the unveiling of the reliquary in the church of Saint-Etienne 'pour demander l'affermissement du beau temps', while the congregations at masses to mark the anniversary of the 9th of Thermidor vastly exceeded those at the official fête. Ibid., pp. 271 and 278.

⁵¹ Cited in H. Forestier, 'Le culte laïc', *Annales de Bourgogne*, vol. xxiv, (1952), pp. 105-10, p. 109.

unique to the unruly West.⁵² Public servants from irreproachably Republican regions were sacked for a host of similar offences throughout the late 1790s, but whether these men were simply incapable of enforcing the law in the cemetery or actively colluded in its violation, one point is overwhelmingly clear.⁵³ Beyond the cities and the garrison towns, in a countryside where the writ of the Republic frequently depended on the willingness of one man to court controversy within his own community, the Directory's debate on the remembrance of the dead was at best an irrelevance, at worst an outrage.

Ultimately, this impasse could only be resolved at the Republic's expense. The 18th of brumaire did not bring the Revolution to an immediate close, but it did herald a defining moment in its relations with the Church. An intimation of this came a little over a month after the coup that brought the Directory down, when the Consuls, or more particularly Bonaparte, decreed that:

il est de la dignité de la nation française et conforme à la sensibilité du caractère national de donner des marques de considération à un homme qui occupa un des premiers rangs sur la terre.⁵⁴

The man in question was, of course, Pius VI, and the mark of the nation's respect was a funeral with full pontifical honours in Valence. In December 1799, this was still an isolated gesture, and the Republic's religious policies remained, for the time being, in place, but the significance of this decree was not lost on the Catholics who had been denounced only a few months before for saying masses in memory of the 'assassin de Basseville... et de tant de Français.'⁵⁵ In this ceremonial precursor of the Concordat, the prospect of some form of *rapprochement* between Revolutionary politics, popular religious belief and the remembrance of the dead finally loomed into view. With the enactment of the Concordat and the passage of the Napoleonic legislation on

⁵² According to Reinhard, the mayor of Saint-Calais' acquiescence in his neighbours' defence of the cross in their cemetery was widely repeated throughout the Sarthe. Confronted by a series of similar incidents in the Hautes-Alpes, the *agent-national* of Briançon angrily informed his subordinates that 'de pareils écarts ne sauraient être tolérés.' Reinhard, *Le département de la Sarthe*, p. 128, and J. Palou, 'L'anticlérisme dans les Hautes-Alpes en 1795', *A. h. R. f.*, vol. 25, (1951) pp. 298-9.

⁵³ In the spring of 1796, for example, officials from the Yonne, the Bouches-du-Rhône, the Bas-Rhin and the Lot were dismissed for having wilfully neglected 'l'exécution des lois sur la police des cultes.' Debidour, *Recueil des Actes du Directoire*, vol. i, pp. 633, 725, and vol. ii, p. 189, 264 and 267.

⁵⁴ A. M. no. 100, 10 nivôse an VIII.

⁵⁵ 'Lettre du commissaire central de la Somme à l'administration municipale d'Abbeville, le 17 vendémiaire an VIII', *Annales de la Religion*, vol. ix, p. 523. Sensing the wider implications of this decree, the *Annales de la Religion* accompanied its publication with the emphatic declaration: 'Graces soient rendues à Bonaparte!' *Annales de la Religion*, vol. x, p. 192.

cemeteries in prairial *an XII*, that *rapprochement* was at last accomplished, and while the new law did not mark an unqualified return to the *status quo ante*, it did restore the vast majority of 'les cérémonies précédemment usitées pour les convois, suivant les différens cultes'.⁵⁶ Until then, however, the grave would remain a bitterly contested space. Between the Republic's determination to exclude the clergy from the cemetery and the Catholic's embittered cry:

Téméraire! est-ce donc à vous à m'apprendre comment je dois m'affliger?... Il me faut à moi pour me consoler, ma religion, ses spectacles, et ses chants. Je n'ai besoin ni de Caton déchirant ses entrailles, ni de Socrate buvant la ciguë, il me faut Jésus-Christ souffrant sur la croix... ma douleur est-elle séditeuse?

there could be no compromise.⁵⁷ In a Republic where sorrow could be seditious, the religion of the majority and the Revolution's rites of memory remained, to all intents and purposes, irreconcilable.

How many shared Rebour's indignation? How many felt the widow Courbet's sense of shame, sorrow and rage? How many believed, like them, that they and their loved ones had been wronged by the refusal of the last rites and the denial of a customary burial? How many abhorred the emotional bankruptcy of Fouché's 'la mort est un sommeil éternel' or turned away in disgust from the *théophilanthropes*' sterile sermonizing and summoned the village *béate* to mumble a blessing over the unshriven corpse of a parent, spouse or child? How many echoed the complaint heard in Artonne in the winter of *an II*: 'Nous voulons bien la république mais nous voulons la religion' and how long did it take for such communities to renounce one for the other?⁵⁸ How many simply mourned the dead of the 1790s as they had always done, and raised the roadside crosses and makeshift shrines that still dot the Breton woods in memory of the victims of both chouan atrocity and Revolutionary excess?⁵⁹ Reporting on the devotions that had already begun around Marie Martin's grave in the woods at Teillay, a bewildered bureaucrat remarked incredulously in 1795:

⁵⁶ From the extravagant display of mourning to the processions of the poor that traditionally accompanied the coffin to the grave, the customary honours were, quite simply, 'rétablies', subject to the proper payment of course. Obviously, the state did not entirely opt out of the politics of the tomb in prairial *an XII*, the size and salubrity of the cemetery remained a constant concern, but in most other respects, it left the care of the dead to the family and the church *fabrique*. For a discussion of how this legislation worked in practice, see Kselman, *Death and the Afterlife*, pp. 165-221.

⁵⁷ Rebour, 'Sur les Sépultures', *Annales de la Religion*, vol. iii, no. 24, 24 vendémiaire an V, p. 575.

⁵⁸ Martin, *Les Jacobins au village*, p. 111.

⁵⁹ M. Lagrée and J. Roche, *Tombes de Mémoire: la dévotion populaire aux victimes de la Révolution dans l'Ouest*, (Rennes, 1993)

'Aristocrates comme patriotes, tous y vont.'⁶⁰ Few Revolutionary monuments could ever make this claim. The Panthéon certainly could not, for all the hopes and money that had been invested in it, but then, the Panthéon never promised to cure the sick and make the lame walk. Its ambitions had always been loftier than that.

Much research remains to be done on the nature and extent of the religious revival after the Terror. However, the nationwide rush to reopen churches and revitalize confraternities, to baptise infants and sanctify marriages, to salvage relics and statues, to find and shelter priests, and where this was impossible, to perform *messes blanches* and lay-led funerals would suggest that the widow Courbet's feelings were widely shared, even in regions where the Republic was still welcome.⁶¹ For the men and women who joined in this revival, the 1790s did not, as Ariès assumed, usher in a glorious new era in the relationship between the living and the dead, 'un culte nouveau, le culte des morts.'⁶² For Mme Courbet and the 'femmes fanatiques' and 'foutues garces' like her that Revolutionary officials denounced with such intemperate regularity from 1793 onwards, for the people of Saint-Calais and the crowd that marked the ending of the Terror in Courthézon with a march to the cemetery and a *Kyrie Eleison*, the Revolution represented instead an unforgivable intrusion into that relationship.⁶³ It represented an attack on a cult of the dead that long predated the foundation of Père Lachaise, a violation of the customs that communities held most dear and a denial of the dignity, however rudimentary it was, that a decent burial conferred in death. For this reason, Mme Courbet seems a much more eloquent witness as to what the commemoration of the dead had come to mean in Revolutionary France than any of the Delamelles, Roederers or La Revellières. For all the naïveté of her verse and the parochialism of her concerns, and in the end, death is always a parochial affair, a matter for families, friends and neighbours, Mme Courbet's anger was felt throughout France. For the majority of French men and

⁶⁰ Lagrée and Roche, *Tombes de Mémoire*, p. 74.

⁶¹ On the rapid revival of the confraternities after the Revolution, see, for example, M. Agulhon, *La Vie Sociale en Provence Intérieure au Lendemain de la Révolution*, (Paris, 1970) pp. 414-7, and J. Merriman, *The Red City: Limoges and the French Nineteenth Century*, (Oxford, 1985) pp. 10-11.

⁶² Ariès, *L'homme devant la mort*, vol. ii, p. 226.

⁶³ For the rally in Courthézon's cemetery and the cries of 'nous redressons toutes les croix, nous faisons les dimanches et la décade sera à bas' that accompanied it in fructidor *an II*, see P. Vailland, 'Les débuts de la Terreur blanche en Vaucluse', *A. h. R. f.*, vol. v, (1928) pp. 109-127, p. 117.

women, the Revolution had not democratised the remembrance of the dead; it had demeaned it.

Even among those who did not join this stampede into the arms of an unforgiving clergy after the Terror, how many simply missed the chance to console friends and exchange stories at the wakes that had always, as an adage had it, 'remettre les gens ensemble', but that the Revolutionary authorities now frowned upon?⁶⁴ How many remembered the repeated promises that the Republic honoured its soldiers' sacrifice and felt betrayed by the absence of any monument in their memory? As the ranks of the Revolution's widows swelled with every new campaign, how many listened listlessly to a civil servant's speech in honour of a Hoche or Joubert and thought of the husbands and sons left to die on battlefields unburied and unblessed? How many tried to honour these men as best they could and, like the townsfolk of Pézenas, took the trouble to raise a cross, and the choice of a cross is significant enough in itself, over the place where a thousand French soldiers had been cast into an unmarked grave between 1793 and 1796, the victims of what passed for treatment in the Republic's overcrowded and under-funded military hospitals?⁶⁵ How many, ultimately, cast a cold eye on the parade that delivered the *Grand Siècle's* greatest general to a place of honour in *les Invalides*, and wondered what, after a decade of Revolution, had really changed?

In truth, it is impossible to answer any of these questions. Quantification can never calculate whether the war-widows' three *francs* a week could ever compensate for the death of a husband on a foreign field, any more than the discursive strategies so beloved of cultural historians can ever comprehend the 'pleurs secrets et des regrets silencieux' that the Revolution gave rise to.⁶⁶ Confronted by the scale of human suffering the Revolution left in its wake, confronted by all the hopes that ended in 'désespoir'; confronted, in the end, by so many dead to remember, the normal tools of the historical trade can seem rather inadequate. And yet, Mme Courbet's voice rings out insistently. 'On conduit un corps au tombeau... À pourrir dans la terre.' After

⁶⁴ According to an amiénois expression: 'il n'y a rien comme le feu et la mort pour remettre les gens ensemble.' Cited in A. Van Gennep, *Le Folklore Français*, vol. i, p. 607.

⁶⁵ For this cross, see C. Allerge, 'Vie et mort des soldats de l'an II à l'hôpital de l'égalité de Pézenas', *Études sur Pézenas et sa région*, vol. ii, (1971) pp. 9-29.

⁶⁶ Thibaudeau, *Mémoires sur la Convention et le Directoire*, vol. i, p. 50.

ten years of turmoil, ten years of fine words, broken promises and betrayed hopes, perhaps this is what most French men and women believed the Revolution had brought to the remembrance of their dead.

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